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PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Jane Austen



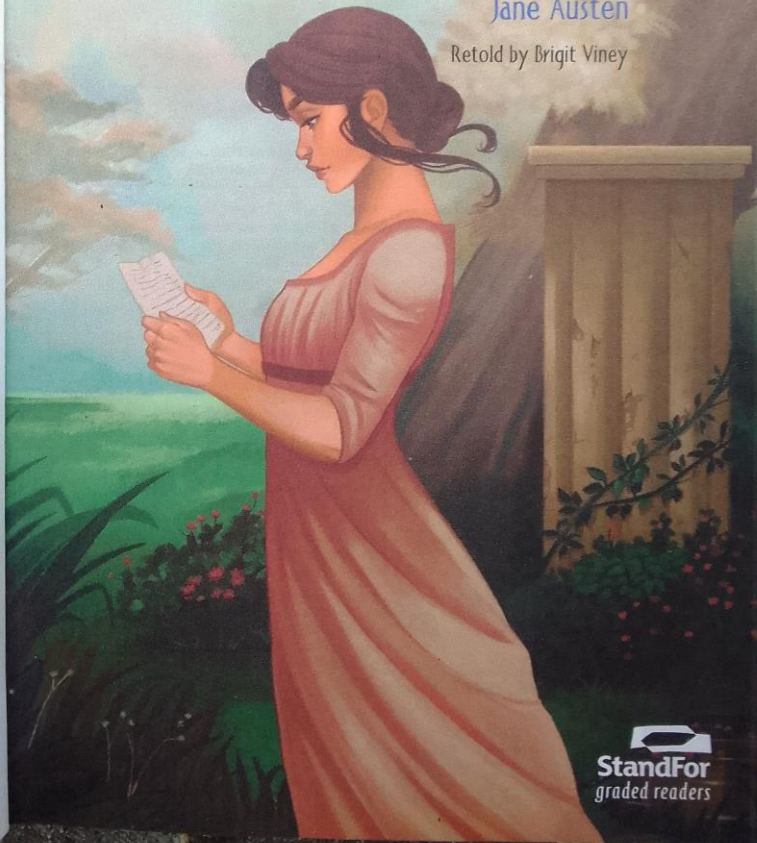

StandFor
graded readers

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PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Jane Austen

Retold by Brigit Viney



StandFor
graded readers

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BEFORE READING



Look at the picture on the front of the book and read the back cover. Check the correct answers.

1. Which century are these people living in?

- a. the twentieth ☐
- b. the nineteenth ☐
- c. the eighteenth ☐
- d. the seventeenth ☐

2. The story is about ...

- a. the adventures of a young man. ☐
- b. a young man who disappears. ☐
- c. the love between a man and a woman. ☐
- d. a young woman's search for her father. ☐

3. In the story ...

- a. Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy like each other immediately. ☐
- b. Mr. Darcy has known the Bennets for a long time. ☐
- c. Elizabeth Bennet goes to work for Mr. Darcy's family. ☐
- d. Mr. Darcy is much richer than the Bennets. ☐



Check the things that you think are in the story.

a rich gentleman ☒

some walks in the country ☐

Elizabeth Bennet's parents ☐

a doctor ☐

a voyage to America ☐

some soldiers ☐

an accident ☐

three brothers ☐

a rich aunt ☐

a long letter from Mr. Darcy ☐

some very poor people ☐

a bad storm ☐

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Chapter

1

The Bennets

"My dear Mr. Bennet," his wife said to him one day, "have you heard that somebody is going to live in Netherfield Park at last?"

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

"Well, a rich young man is going to live there, and his servants are coming next week. His name is Mr. Bingley, he is single, and he makes four or five thousand pounds a year. What a fine thing it is for our girls. He may marry one of them!"

"Is that his reason for coming here?" asked Mr. Bennet.

"Of course not! But he may fall in love with one of them, and so you must visit him as soon as he comes. We cannot visit him if you do not."

"I will just send him a note to say he can marry which one he chooses, and that he may like Elizabeth the best."

"Please do not!" replied Mrs. Bennet. She did not realize that her husband was teasing her, although they had been married for twenty-three years.

In fact, Mr. Bennet was one of the first gentlemen of the neighborhood to visit Mr. Bingley. When he told Mrs. Bennet this, she was very happy. "What an excellent father you have, girls!" she said.

A few days later, Mr. Bingley visited Mr. Bennet and sat for about ten minutes with him in his library. He had hoped to

see the five young ladies, because he had heard they were beautiful, but he did not. The ladies were luckier because they saw him from an upstairs window and saw that he wore a fashionable blue coat.

About a week later, there was a ball in Meryton. Mrs. Bennet and her daughters – Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty, and Lydia – and all the families in the neighborhood went to it. Mr. Bingley also went, and took with him his two sisters, his older sister's husband and another young man. Mr. Bingley was handsome and friendly, and his sisters were very fine and fashionable. His older sister's husband, Mr. Hurst, and his friend, Mr. Darcy, were clearly gentlemen. Mr. Darcy was tall, handsome, and very rich. A report soon went round the room that he made ten thousand a year. At first, everybody liked him, but then they found that he was very proud. He did not talk to them or dance with them. Mrs. Bennet disliked him very much because he had been unkind about one of her daughters.

Elizabeth Bennet had had to sit down for two dances, because there were not enough gentlemen to dance with, and during that time Mr. Darcy stood near her. She heard Mr. Bingley talking to him.

"Darcy, you must dance," said Mr. Bingley.

"I won't. You know I hate dancing if I don't know my partner. And you are dancing with the only beautiful girl in the room," said Mr. Darcy, looking at Jane, the oldest Miss Bennet.

"Oh, she is the most beautiful girl I have ever seen! But one of her sisters is sitting behind you, and she is very pretty. Let me ask my partner to introduce you."

"Who do you mean?" asked Mr. Darcy, and turned around. He looked for a moment at Elizabeth and then said coldly, "She is not pretty enough for me."

Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley walked away, and Elizabeth did not feel very friendly towards Mr. Darcy. But she also thought that he had been silly, and told her friends about the conversation as a funny story.

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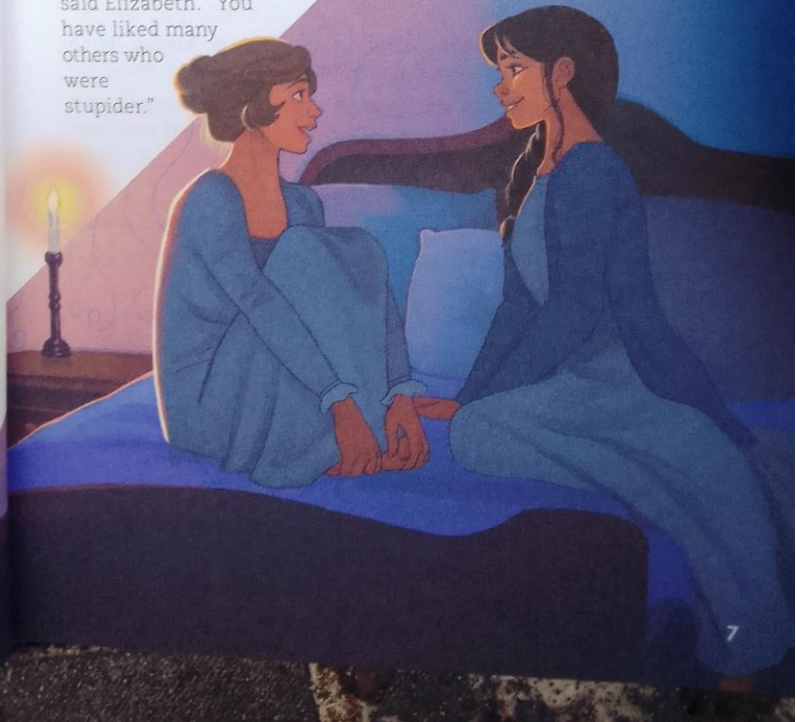
At the end of the evening, Mrs. Bennet was happy because Mr. Bingley had danced twice with Jane and his sisters had spoken to her. The Bennets returned to Longbourn, the village they lived in, and Mrs. Bennet told her husband about the evening.

"Mr. Bingley is very handsome! But Mr. Darcy is very proud. I really dislike him."

When Jane was alone with Elizabeth, she told her how much she liked Mr. Bingley.

"He is so pleasant and easy to talk to!" she said.

"He is also handsome, which a young man should be, if he can, and he is very nice," said Elizabeth. "You have liked many others who were stupider."



"But it is not always good for a woman to hide her feelings," said Charlotte. "If she does, a man may not fall in love with her. Jane needs to show Bingley that she likes him."

"They have only spent four evenings together, and she is not yet sure of her own feelings," replied Elizabeth.

"Well," said Charlotte. "If she married him tomorrow, she would have as much chance of happiness as if she studied him for twelve months. A man is always going to have faults, and it is better to know as little as possible about them before you marry him."

"You make me laugh, Charlotte, but it is not true. And I know you would never act in this way yourself," replied Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was so busy watching Jane and Mr. Bingley that she did not realize that Mr. Darcy had begun to think differently about her. He now thought that her beautiful dark eyes made her face unusually intelligent and that her figure was lovely. He also liked her easy playfulness.

At a large party at Sir William Lucas's, he had a chance to speak to her when she was introduced to him.

"Mr. Darcy, allow me to introduce this young lady to you as an excellent dancing partner," Sir William said. He took Elizabeth's hand and was going to give it to Mr. Darcy, but Elizabeth, looking uncomfortable, said, "I do not plan to dance, sir." Mr. Darcy then politely asked her to dance, but she refused with a smile, and walked away.

Miss Bingley came to talk to Mr. Darcy.

"You must be thinking how boring this party is," she said.

"You are quite wrong. I was thinking about how lovely a pretty woman's face can be when she has a pair of very fine eyes."

"Who were you thinking of?"

"Miss Elizabeth Bennet," replied Mr. Darcy.

"Miss Elizabeth Bennet!" repeated Miss Bingley. "I am very surprised! When must I congratulate you on your marriage? Your wife's mother is lovely and of course she will often visit you at Pemberley."

Mr. Darcy listened to her calmly, and said nothing, and so she continued to talk in this way for a long time.

Chapter 2

Jane Visits Netherfield Park



Mrs. Bennet had a brother, who had a business in London, and a sister, Mrs. Philips, who lived in Meryton. Meryton was near Longbourn and the Miss Bennets walked there

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Chapter 2

several times a week to visit their aunt or the hat shop. The two youngest girls, Kitty and Lydia, went more often than Jane, Elizabeth, and Mary because they always wanted to get the latest news.

At that time, there was always plenty of news because a regiment had arrived in the neighborhood and was going to stay for the winter. Mr. Philips was a lawyer, and he visited all the officers, and this made Kitty and Lydia happier than they had ever been. The only thing they could talk about was officers.

One morning, while Lydia was telling her mother about two of the officers, a servant brought a note for Jane. She opened it and said, "Miss Bingley has asked me to have dinner with her and her sister while the gentlemen are having dinner with the officers."

"Having dinner with the officers," said Mrs. Bennet. "That is very unlucky."

"Can I have the carriage, Mother?" said Jane.

"No, my dear, you must ride there. It will probably rain, and then you will have to stay the night."

Jane left, and soon it began to rain. It rained all evening and Jane could not come home.

The next morning, Elizabeth received a note from Jane. She said that she had a sore throat and headache and could not return home. Elizabeth decided to go to see her.

She walked quickly to Netherfield. She had to cross many fields, and when she arrived, her dress was dirty, and her face was shining from the exercise. Everybody was surprised to see her and to learn that she had walked there. Jane had a fever and was in bed, so Miss Bingley invited Elizabeth to stay at Netherfield to look after her.

Elizabeth stayed with Jane all day. When Jane fell asleep, Elizabeth joined the others in the drawing-room. They were all playing cards and invited her to join them. She refused, but she sat near them and watched the game.

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"I would like to see Miss Darcy again so much!" said Miss Bingley.

"She is so lovely and plays the piano so well."

"All young ladies can do so much!" said Mr. Bingley. "They all paint beautifully and play the piano."

"Ladies should do more than that. They should sing, dance, draw, speak foreign languages, and have excellent manners," said Miss Bingley.

"And they should read widely," added Mr. Darcy. "I know only six women who do all these things."

"I am surprised you know any!" said Elizabeth.

Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst both began to describe women who could do all these things, but then Mr. Hurst told them to return to the card game. The conversation stopped, and Elizabeth soon returned to Jane.

The next morning Jane was still sick. Elizabeth was worried and asked her mother to come. Mrs. Bennet, Kitty, and Lydia reached Netherfield soon after breakfast. Mrs. Bennet saw that Jane was sick, but she did not want her to get better immediately. When she saw Mr. Bingley, she said, "She is too sick to leave. We must ask you to look after her a little longer."

"Leave!" said Bingley. "We will not hear of it!"

"You are very kind, sir," said Mrs. Bennet. "You have a lovely room here, Mr. Bingley. Netherfield is a beautiful place. I hope you won't think of leaving it in a hurry."

"I do everything in a hurry," he replied. "If I decided to leave, I would go in five minutes."

"That is just what I thought you would do," said Elizabeth.

"I did not know that you were a student of character. It must be an amusing study," said Bingley.

"The country cannot offer you many people to study," said Darcy.

"But people themselves change so much that there is always something to study," replied Elizabeth.

"Yes, a lot goes on in the country!" said Mrs. Bennet. She did not like Darcy's way of talking about the country.

"Mr. Darcy only meant that there are not so many sorts of people in the country, which is true," said Elizabeth, feeling embarrassed for her mother.

Mrs. Bennet thanked Mr. Bingley again and ordered her carriage. Lydia then came forward. She was a big girl of fifteen and a favorite with her mother. She was very sure of herself and was not frightened of speaking to Mr. Bingley. When he had first come to Netherfield he had promised to give a ball, and she asked him about it. He promised to give the ball when Jane was better.

Mrs. Bennet, Kitty, and Lydia then left, and Elizabeth returned to Jane. She spent the day with her and only joined the others in the evening. Darcy was writing a letter, and Miss Bingley kept talking to him. Elizabeth was amused by their conversation.

"You write so fast!"

"I write quite slowly."

"You write so easily!"

"He does not!" said Bingley. "He is always trying to think of long words. Aren't you, Darcy?"

"I write in a different way from you," replied Darcy.

"I write very quickly," said Bingley.

"You are proud of your quickness in writing, as you were proud this morning of your quickness in deciding things," said Darcy. "But I am not sure you would leave here quickly. If a friend told you to stay, you would stay."

"That is a good quality!" said Elizabeth. "Do you think it's bad to do what a friend wishes?"

"It's hard to say without knowing what the friend wishes," replied Darcy.

"Oh!" said Bingley. "Let's not talk about this any more. It is becoming an argument."

"I agree," said Elizabeth. "Mr. Darcy should finish his letter."

Mr. Darcy took her advice and when he had finished, he asked the ladies for some music. Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst sang

together, and Elizabeth looked at some music books. She noticed that Mr. Darcy often looked at her. She thought that he could see something wrong in her, but she did not care. In fact, Darcy had never liked a woman so much before. He liked her sweetness and playfulness. "If her family were of a higher rank, I would be in some danger," he thought.

The next day Jane was well enough to come down into the drawing-room after dinner. Mr. Bingley welcomed her warmly and spent half an hour building up the fire for her. Then he sat down next to her and talked to almost nobody else.

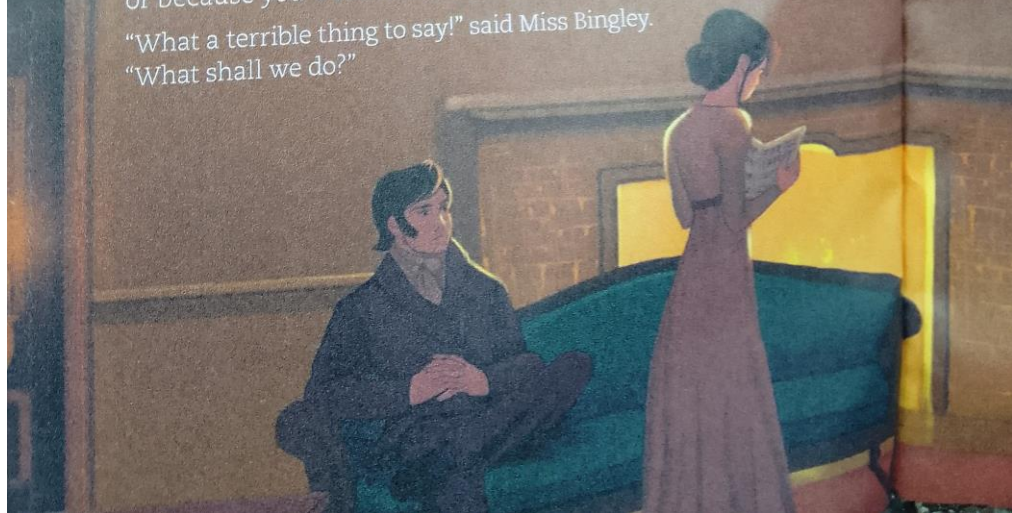
Mr. Hurst lay down on a sofa and went to sleep. Darcy and Miss Bingley began reading, and Mrs. Hurst sometimes joined in with Bingley's conversation with Jane. Miss Bingley soon became bored with her book and began walking around the room. Her figure was good, and she walked well, but Darcy did not look up from his book.

"Will you join me, Elizabeth?" she asked. "It is very enjoyable to move after sitting so long in one place."

Elizabeth was surprised, but agreed. Darcy looked up, and closed his book. Miss Bingley invited him to join them, but he refused. "You want to walk together because you have secrets to discuss, or because you want to show us your figures," he said.

"What a terrible thing to say!" said Miss Bingley.

"What shall we do?"



"Tease him, laugh at him," said Elizabeth. "You must know how to do it."

"I do not!" replied Miss Bingley. "And I cannot laugh at him!"

"I suppose he never does anything silly and has no faults," said Elizabeth.

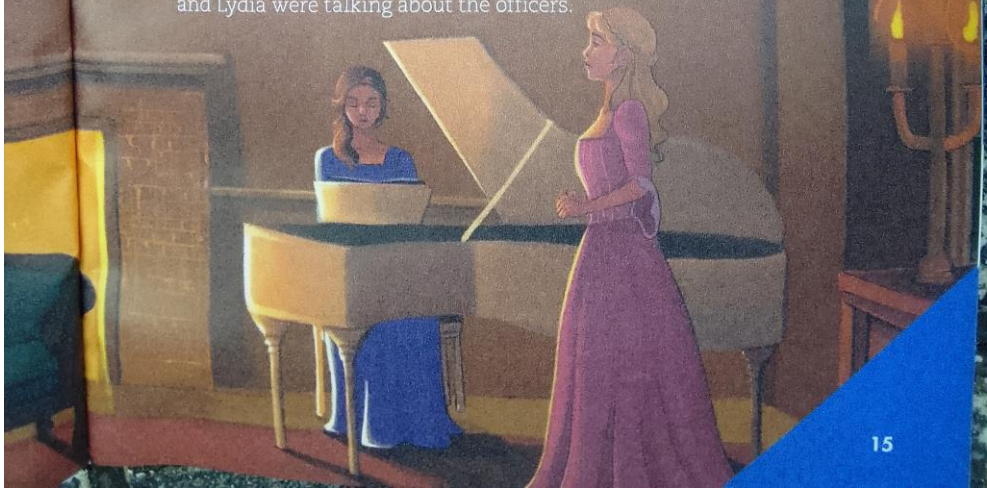
"I have enough faults," said Darcy. "I know that I cannot forget what people do wrong. When people offend me, I do not forgive them."

"That is a bad fault," said Elizabeth. "I cannot laugh at it. You are safe from me."

"Let us have some music," said Miss Bingley. Mrs. Hurst began playing the piano, and Darcy was not sorry. He was beginning to feel the danger of speaking to Elizabeth too much.

The next day was Saturday, and Elizabeth and Jane asked Bingley if they could go home in his carriage. He asked them to stay one more day. Miss Bingley was happy that they were going because she disliked Elizabeth, and Darcy was happy because he liked her too much.

On Sunday, Jane and Elizabeth went home. Their mother did not welcome them very warmly, but their father was happy to see them. Mary was studying as usual, and Kitty and Lydia were talking about the officers.



Mr. Collins and His Plans

"Today, my dear,"
said Mr. Bennet to
his wife at breakfast
the next morning, "we
have a visitor. A gentleman
and a stranger."

"A gentleman and a stranger!
It is Mr. Bingley, I am sure," said
Mrs. Bennet.

"It is not Mr. Bingley," said her husband.

"It is my cousin, Mr. Collins. He wrote to me
about a month ago. He will have this house when
I am dead, as you know."

Mr. Bennet's house had to go, by law, to another man in
his family. It could not go to his wife and daughters.

"Oh, do not talk to me of that hateful man!" said Mrs. Bennet.
"You and his father did not like each other."

"I will read you his letter," said Mr. Bennet, and he read to them:

Hunsford, Kent.
October 15th

Dear Sir,

*The disagreement between you and my father has always made me
unhappy, and since he died I have often wanted to put things right
between us. Last Easter I was very lucky to be given the job of Vicar
of Hunsford by Lady Catherine de Bourgh.*

*I will, of course, be the next person to have your house. I apologize
for that, and I wish to do what I can to help your daughters. If I
may, I would like to come to you on Monday, November 18th at four*

o'clock and to stay with you until Saturday, 30th. Lady Catherine is happy for me to be away from Hunsford for this time.

Your friend,
William Collins

"I cannot see how he can help us, although it is kind of him to wish to do so," said Jane.

"And what does he mean by apologizing for getting the house when you die, sir? We cannot suppose he would stop that happening, if he could," said Elizabeth.

Mr. Collins arrived at about four o'clock that afternoon. He was a tall, heavy-looking young man, aged twenty-five. He was very polite to everybody and praised everything: the dining-room, the furniture, and the dinner. He asked which of his cousins had made the dinner and Mrs. Bennet told him that they had a cook and that her daughters did nothing in the kitchen. He apologized immediately and continued to apologize for a quarter of an hour.

After dinner, Mr. Bennet asked Mr. Collins about Lady Catherine. Mr. Collins said that she was very good to him. She had twice asked him to dinner at Rosings, had advised him to marry, and suggested some changes to his home.

"Does she live near you?" asked Mrs. Bennet.

"Yes. There is a little road outside my garden, and on the other side of it is Rosings Park, where she lives."

"Does she have any family?" asked Mrs. Bennet.

"She has a daughter. Her health is often poor, but she is very pleasant," replied Mr. Collins.

Mr. Collins had come to Longbourn with the plan to marry one of his five cousins. He had a good house and enough money, and he wanted to help them. His plan did not change when he saw them.

Jane's lovely face made her his first choice, but the next morning, when he told Mrs. Bennet of his plan, she said, "I

do not know about my younger daughters, but I think Jane may be soon engaged."

Mr. Collins immediately planned to marry Elizabeth instead.

After breakfast, Mr. Collins, Jane, Elizabeth, Kitty, and Lydia walked to Meryton. There, they met an officer they knew, who introduced them to a very handsome young man called Mr. Wickham, who had just joined the regiment. They were all talking together when Darcy and Bingley arrived on their horses. They stopped and spoke to the young ladies. Suddenly Darcy and Wickham saw each other, and Elizabeth saw their faces change: one turned white, the other red. What did this mean? Elizabeth wanted very much to know.

Bingley and Darcy rode away, and the Miss Bennets walked to Mr. Philips's house. Lydia and Kitty told Mrs. Philips about Mr. Wickham, and she promised to make her husband invite him and some other officers to dinner the next day. She invited the Bennet girls to come in the evening for a game of cards and some supper.

So, the next evening, Mr. Collins and the Miss Bennets all went to the Philipses'. Mr. Collins praised the room and the furniture and described all the drawing-rooms at Rosings. To the girls, it seemed a very long time before the other gentlemen came in. Then the card tables were put out, and Wickham sat at one with Elizabeth. She wanted very much to know how he knew Darcy, but she could not ask him. Unexpectedly, he asked how long Darcy had been staying at Netherfield.

"About a month," said Elizabeth. "He has a large house in Derbyshire, I understand."

"Yes," replied Wickham, "he does. I have known him and his family since I was a child."

Elizabeth looked surprised.

"You are surprised, Miss Bennet, because you saw how we met yesterday. Do you know Mr. Darcy well?"

"As well as I want to," replied Elizabeth warmly. "I have spent four days in the same house with him, and I

think he is very unpleasant. And everybody in the neighborhood thinks he is proud. Nobody speaks well of him here."

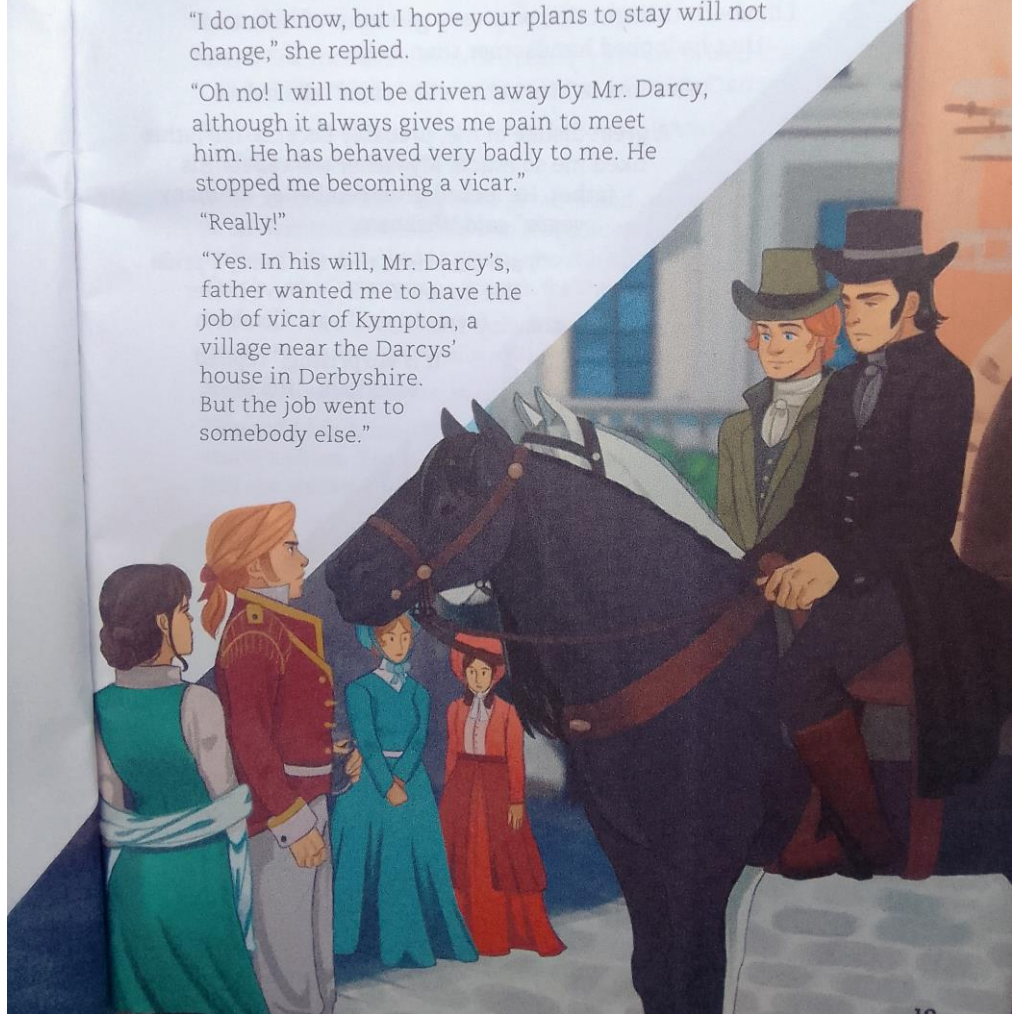
Wickham only shook his head. "I wonder if he will be here much longer," he said.

"I do not know, but I hope your plans to stay will not change," she replied.

"Oh no! I will not be driven away by Mr. Darcy, although it always gives me pain to meet him. He has behaved very badly to me. He stopped me becoming a vicar."

"Really!"

"Yes. In his will, Mr. Darcy's, father wanted me to have the job of vicar of Kympton, a village near the Darcys' house in Derbyshire. But the job went to somebody else."



"How did that happen?" asked Elizabeth.

"The will was not completely clear, and Mr. Darcy chose not to follow it. I have done nothing wrong, but he hates me. But I will never say anything against him because I cannot forget his father."

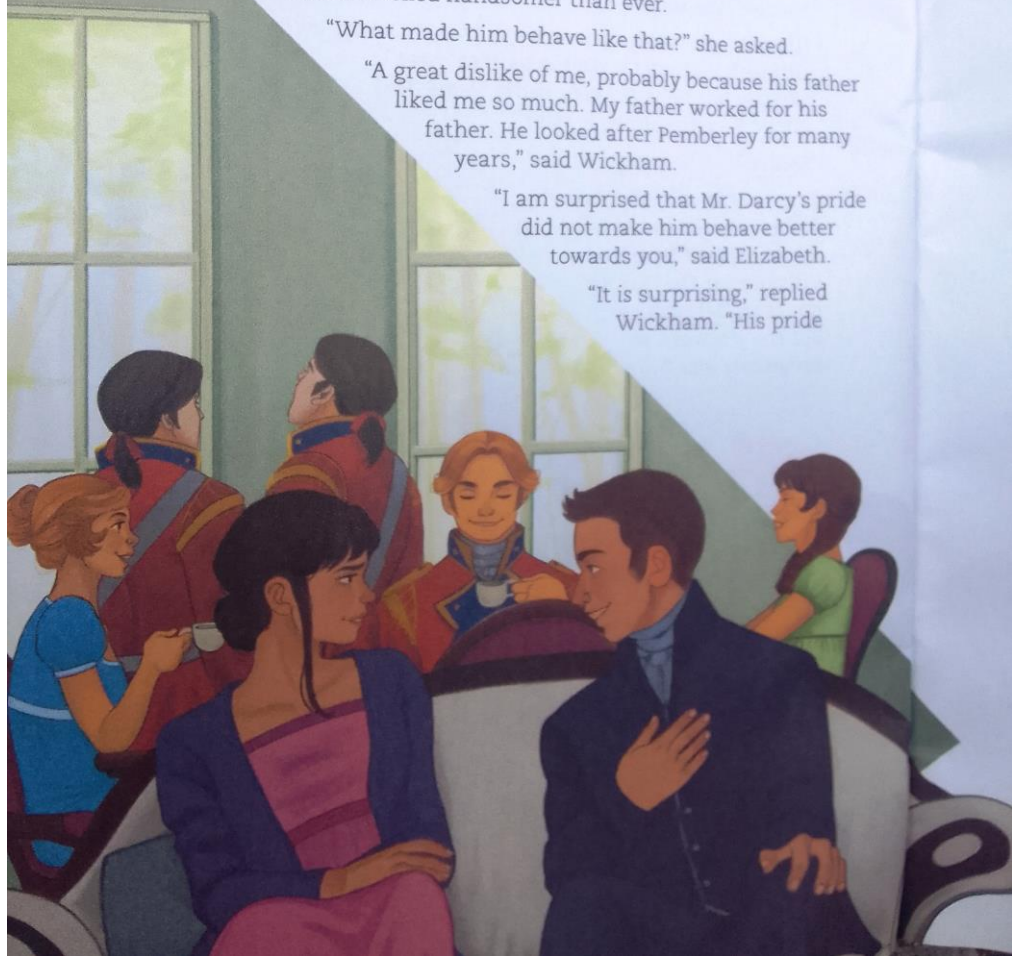
Elizabeth thought this was very generous of him, and that he looked handsomer than ever.

"What made him behave like that?" she asked.

"A great dislike of me, probably because his father liked me so much. My father worked for his father. He looked after Pemberley for many years," said Wickham.

"I am surprised that Mr. Darcy's pride did not make him behave better towards you," said Elizabeth.

"It is surprising," replied Wickham. "His pride



has often made him behave well. It has often made him very generous. And he is very kind to his sister."

"What sort of girl is Miss Darcy?"

"She is very, very proud, too. She is about fifteen, and she lives in London with a lady who looks after her."

After a few moments, Elizabeth said, "I am surprised that he is a friend of Mr. Bingley's. He cannot know what Mr. Darcy is like."

"Probably not. But Mr. Darcy can be very pleasant with those who are the same rank as him."

A few minutes later, the card game ended, and Mr. Collins came to sit next to Elizabeth. He had lost some money, but he told Mrs. Philips: "I do not need to worry about losing a little money. I must thank Lady Catherine de Bourgh for that."

Wickham heard this, and quietly asked Elizabeth if Mr. Collins knew the de Bourgh family well.

"Lady Catherine has just given him a job as a vicar," Elizabeth replied.

"She and Lady Anne Darcy were sisters, so she is Mr. Darcy's aunt," said Wickham. "Her daughter will be very rich, and it is believed that she and Mr. Darcy will marry."

Elizabeth thought of poor Miss Bingley and smiled.

The next day Elizabeth told Jane what Wickham had told her. Jane could not believe that Darcy had acted badly, and she could only think that there had been a misunderstanding.

Mr. Bingley and his sisters came to Longbourn to invite the Bennets to the ball at Netherfield on the coming Tuesday. All the Miss Bennets were happy at the thought of the ball. Elizabeth asked Mr. Collins if he would go.

"Yes, I will," he replied, "and I hope you will dance the first two dances with me."

Elizabeth did not want to dance them with him, but she had to accept as politely as she could. She suddenly saw that he had chosen her as a possible wife. Her mother made it clear that she would like her to marry him, but Elizabeth said nothing. Perhaps he would not ask her.

The Ball at Netherfield Park

Chapter 4

When Elizabeth entered the drawing-room at Netherfield, she could not see Wickham anywhere. She was told that he had gone to London because he had not wanted to see somebody. This person was clearly Darcy and Elizabeth felt angry with him.

After the first two dances with Mr. Collins, Elizabeth went to talk to Charlotte Lucas. Suddenly Darcy appeared and asked Elizabeth for the next two dances. She was so surprised she accepted. After he had walked away, Charlotte said: "He will probably be very nice."

"I hope not! It would be terrible to find that a man is nice when I have decided to hate him!"

At the start of the dance, Elizabeth and Darcy stood for some time without speaking. Then Elizabeth said something about the dance. He replied and was then silent again. After a few minutes she said, "It is your turn to say something now, Mr. Darcy. We must speak a little, you know."

He asked if she and her sisters often walked to Meryton. She said they did, and then added, "When you met us there last week, we had just met Mr. Wickham."

Darcy's face darkened but he said nothing. At that moment Sir William Lucas appeared.

"What an excellent dancer you are, sir!" he said. "And your lovely partner is equally good. I hope to see you together many more

times in the future!" He looked at Jane and Bingley, who were dancing together. "There will soon be many congratulations!"

Darcy looked at his friend and Jane. His face was very serious. After a few moments he turned to Elizabeth and said, "I have forgotten what we were talking about."

"I do not think we were talking at all. We have tried to talk about two or three things, and what we can talk about next I do not know."

"What do you think of books?" he asked, smiling.

"Books! Oh no! I cannot talk of books in a ball-room."

After a few moments she said, "You once said, Mr. Darcy, that you cannot forget when people do wrong. You are very careful, I suppose, before you decide that they have done wrong?"

"I am," he said.

"And prejudice is never a part of your decision?"

"I hope not. May I ask the reason for these questions?"

"I am trying to understand your character," she replied, trying to sound less serious. "But people say very different things about you."

"I can believe that," he answered. "I wish, Miss Bennet, that you might leave understanding my character for another time."

"But I may never have another chance."

"Then you must take this one," he coldly replied. The dance ended, and they left each other in silence.

A few minutes later Miss Bingley spoke to Elizabeth. "So, I hear from Jane that you like George Wickham! Let me advise you not to believe everything he says. Mr. Darcy has always been very kind to him, although George Wickham has behaved very badly towards him. But we could not expect better from him because his father was only a servant."

"That is no reason to believe that he has done wrong!" said Elizabeth angrily.

"Forgive me," replied Miss Bingley, turning away. "I meant to help you."

Elizabeth went to find Jane.

"What have you learned about Wickham?" Elizabeth asked.

"Well, Mr. Bingley does not know him, nor how he has offended Darcy, but he says Darcy is a very good man," replied Jane.

"Well, as he has not heard Wickham's story, I am going to think of both gentlemen as I did before."

At supper Mrs. Bennet loudly told Lady Lucas how she expected Jane and Bingley to marry. Elizabeth asked her to speak more quietly because Darcy was sitting opposite them, but her mother did not listen to her. Elizabeth felt ashamed of her mother and she saw that Darcy looked very serious.

After supper the young ladies were asked to sing, and Mary was the first to agree. Her voice was weak, but she loved singing in front of people, so she sang two songs. Elizabeth looked at her father, asking him to stop her from singing another one. He said to Mary, "That is very good, child. Let the other young ladies have time to sing."

Mary looked surprised, and Elizabeth felt sorry for her, and for what her father had said. She felt she had done no good.

At the end of the ball, Bingley told them he was going to London the next day for a short time, and Mrs. Bennet invited him for a family dinner when he returned. She was perfectly happy, but Elizabeth was sure that Bingley's sisters, and Darcy, thought her family had very bad manners.

The next morning, after breakfast, Mr. Collins asked Mrs. Bennet if he could speak to Elizabeth privately. Mrs. Bennet immediately agreed and as soon as she had left the room, Mr. Collins began.

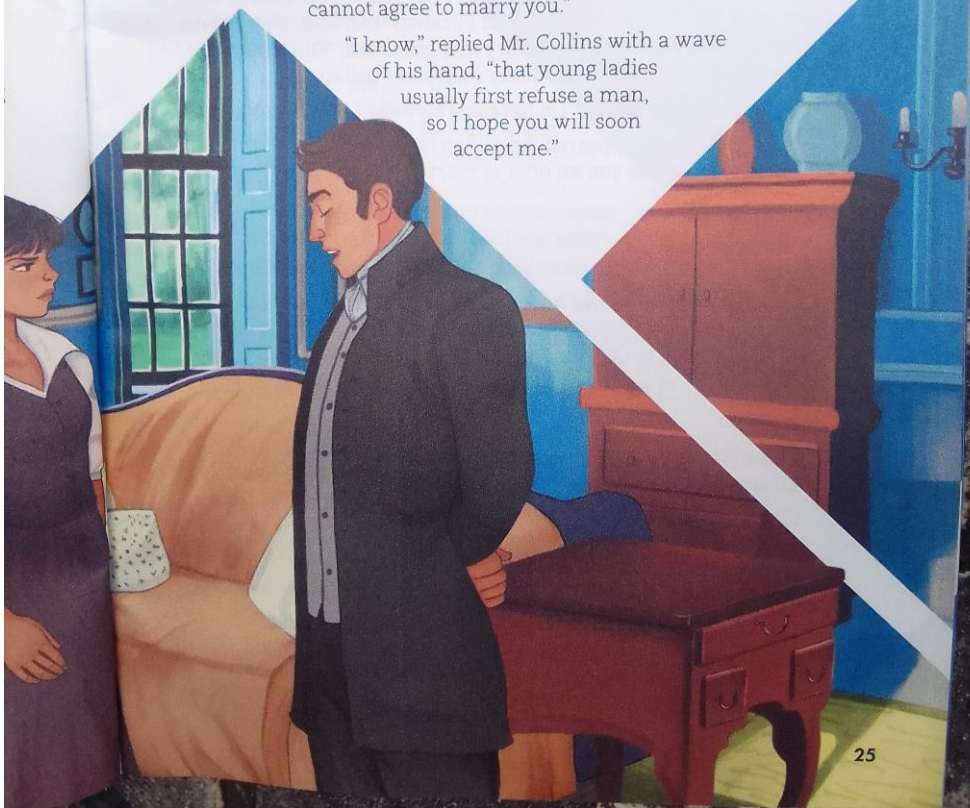
"My dear Miss Elizabeth, you must know what I am going to ask you, but first



I want to tell you my reasons for marrying. Firstly, it is the right thing for every vicar to do, as an example for others. Secondly, it will add greatly to my happiness; and thirdly, Lady Catherine has told me I must marry. I felt I should choose a wife from your family because I will have this house when your father dies. And now I must say how strong my feelings are for you. I do not care that you have very little money and I will never say anything about that when we are married."

Elizabeth had to stop him. "You forget, sir, that I have not answered you yet," she said. "Let me thank you, but I cannot agree to marry you."

"I know," replied Mr. Collins with a wave of his hand, "that young ladies usually first refuse a man, so I hope you will soon accept me."



"I am serious, sir," said Elizabeth. "You could not make me happy, and I am the last woman in the world who would make you happy."

"My dear cousin, I believe you will accept me, as I think I can offer you a pleasant home. And although you are lovely, you may not receive another offer, and you will not have much money in the future. For these reasons I believe you wish to increase my love for you by refusing me. I am sure that when your excellent parents have agreed to my offer, you will accept it."

Elizabeth could say nothing and left the room. Mrs. Bennet went in, and Mr. Collins told her what Elizabeth had said. Mrs. Bennet immediately went to the library and called out, "Oh, Mr. Bennet, you must come and make Lizzy marry Mr. Collins."

Mr. Bennet said calmly, "Let her come here and I will talk to her."

When Elizabeth appeared, he said to her: "I understand that Mr. Collins has made you an offer of marriage and you have refused it. Is that true?"

"It is."

"Your mother says you must accept it. Is that not so, Mrs. Bennet?"

"Yes, or I will never see her again."

"You have a difficult choice, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. Your mother will never see you again if you do not marry Mr. Collins, and I will never see you again if you do."

Elizabeth smiled, but Mrs. Bennet was not amused. She told Elizabeth again and again that she should accept Mr. Collins.

Charlotte Lucas came to spend the day with them and heard the news. Mrs. Bennet talked for a long time about how she would not speak to Elizabeth again, and only stopped when Mr. Collins entered the room.

"Oh! Mr. Collins!" began Mrs. Bennet in a sad voice.

"My dear Mrs. Bennet," he replied, "let us say no more about this. I wanted to marry one of your daughters, and if the way I acted was wrong, I must apologize."

Chapter

5

Mr. Collins Surprises Everybody

For the rest of the day, Mr. Collins hardly spoke to Elizabeth. Instead, he spoke to Charlotte Lucas, who listened to him politely.

After breakfast the next day, the girls walked to Meryton. They found Wickham there, and he walked with them to their aunt's. They talked about the ball, and he told Elizabeth: "I felt it was better not to be in the same room as Darcy for so many hours. I did not want something unpleasant to happen."

Wickham walked back to Longbourn with the girls and he talked to Elizabeth most of the time. She enjoyed their conversation and happily introduced him to her parents when they reached Longbourn. Soon after their return, Jane received a letter from Netherfield. As she read it, her face changed but she said nothing. When Wickham had left, Jane and Elizabeth went up to their bedroom and Jane said, "The letter is from Miss Bingley. She says they have all gone to London and do not plan to come back this winter."

Elizabeth was not worried. "It is unlucky that you did not see them to say goodbye, but Mr. Bingley will not need to stay in London with them," she said.

"You do not know everything," said Jane. "I will read you the part that most hurts me: Mr. Darcy is impatient to see his sister, and my sister and I wish to meet her again, too. She is a beautiful girl, and we hope that one day she will marry our brother. He likes



her very much and he will see her very often in London. Am I wrong, my dearest Jane, to hope for an event that will make so many people happy? I see that she does not wish me to marry her brother and that he has no feelings for me."

"She sees that her brother is in love with you, but she wants him to marry Miss Darcy," said Elizabeth, but Jane shook her head. "You must believe me, dearest Jane. Everybody can see that he is in love with you, but we are not rich enough for Miss Bingley, and she hopes that if Mr. Bingley marries Miss Darcy, Mr. Darcy will marry her. But she cannot make her brother fall in love with Miss Darcy instead of you."

"But how could I accept him if his sisters want him to marry somebody else?" asked Jane.

"You must decide if the unhappiness of making his sisters sad is greater than the happiness of being his wife. If it is, then you must refuse him," said Elizabeth.

"How can you talk so?" said Jane, smiling. "You know that I would accept him. But if he does not return this winter, he may not ask me. A thousand things may happen in six months."

That day, the Bennets had dinner with the Lucases, and again Charlotte listened politely to Mr. Collins. When Elizabeth thanked her, Charlotte told her she was happy to help. In fact, Charlotte planned to make Mr. Collins ask her to marry him.

She succeeded. The next morning, he escaped from Longbourn House and hurried to Lucas Lodge to ask her. He did not want his cousins to see him go because he did not want them to know about his plan.

Charlotte saw him from an upstairs window and immediately left the house to meet him in the road, as if by accident. He offered, she accepted, and Mr. Collins went to Sir William and Lady Lucas to ask for their agreement. They were happy to give it as they had very little money to give their daughter. Lady Lucas began to think about how many more years Mr. Bennet might live before Mr. Collins would get his house. Charlotte herself was quite happy. Mr. Collins was not very pleasant, but he would be her husband. Without thinking

highly of either men or marriage, she had always wanted to marry because she did not want to be poor. She felt she was lucky: she was twenty-seven and not pretty. The most unpleasant part would be telling Elizabeth, who was her dearest friend. She knew Elizabeth would not like her decision. She wanted to tell her herself, so she told Mr. Collins to say nothing about what had happened when he returned to Longbourn. Mr. Collins did as she asked, although he wanted very much to tell them of his success.

That night, Mr. Collins said goodbye to everybody, as he was going to leave very early the next day. Mrs. Bennet said politely that they hoped to see him again soon.

"My dear Mrs. Bennet, you may be sure that I will be back as soon as possible."

They were all surprised, and Mr. Bennet, who did not want him to return quickly, asked, "Will Lady Catherine agree to another visit so soon?"



"I am sure that she will," replied Mr. Collins. "And now I must wish all my cousins health and happiness." And with that, they all went to bed.

The next morning, Charlotte Lucas called and told Elizabeth privately what had happened. Elizabeth had wondered in the last day or two if Mr. Collins thought he was in love with her friend, but she had not thought that Charlotte would accept him. When she heard her friend's news she said, "Engaged to Mr. Collins! My dear Charlotte! Impossible!"

"Why are you surprised?" asked Charlotte. "Do you think every woman will think of Mr. Collins as you do?"

Elizabeth, now calmer, said, "I wish you all possible happiness."

"I hope you can understand what I have done," replied Charlotte. "I want a comfortable home, and I think I will be as happy with Mr. Collins as with anybody else."

Charlotte left soon after this, and Elizabeth went to sit with her mother and sisters. As she was sitting with them, Sir William appeared and told them that Charlotte was engaged to Mr. Collins. Mrs. Bennet was too surprised to say much, but when he had gone, she talked about it for a long time. She was angry with Elizabeth, Mr. Collins, and Charlotte. For a week she could not see Elizabeth without speaking angrily to her, for a month she could not speak politely to Sir William and Lady Lucas, and for many months she could not forgive their daughter.

Elizabeth felt she could not be so close to Charlotte now, and she turned more and more to Jane. She was worried about her because Bingley had been away for a week. Jane had written to Miss Bingley but had not had a reply.

Mr. Collins wrote to say that he hoped to return to Hertfordshire two weeks on Monday and to marry Charlotte as soon as possible. Mrs. Bennet told her husband she did not want him to visit again. She was also worried that Bingley had not returned. Day after day passed without any news of him. Even Elizabeth began to think that his sisters and Darcy would keep him away. Mr. Collins returned on the promised day and, luckily for

the Bennets, he spent most of each day at Lucas Lodge. Mrs. Bennet found Charlotte's visits to Longbourn House very difficult. She thought Charlotte was always thinking of when she would live there, and how she would make Mrs. Bennet and her daughters leave.

"It is very hard to think of Charlotte Lucas here," she said to her husband, "and to think that I shall see her in my place!"

"My dear, do not think in this way. Let us hope that I will live longer than you."

This did not help Mrs. Bennet and she continued to be angry.



A second letter from Miss Bingley arrived. She said that they were all going to stay in London for the winter and that her brother was sorry that he had not said goodbye to them. She described how close he was becoming to Miss Darcy. Elizabeth did not believe that Bingley was in love with Miss Darcy, but she was angry with him for not following his heart and for hurting Jane.

Jane told her: "I will not be sad. He will be forgotten, and we shall be as we were before. It has all been my mistake. Luckily, I have hurt only myself."

"My dear Jane!" said Elizabeth. "You are too good!"

Jane immediately said that she was not.

"No," said Elizabeth, "This is not fair. You think well of everybody, so you must let me think that you are perfect. Do not worry that I will think well of everybody. Every day I see how stupid people can be. I will not talk about one person, but Charlotte is another. I cannot understand her!"

"My dear Lizzy, Charlotte wants to be comfortable. Be ready to believe that she will respect and love our cousin in time."

"For you, I would try to believe anything, but you know that Mr. Collins is a silly man, and that the woman who marries him cannot be happy."

"Your language is too strong," replied Jane, "and I hope you will see that when you see them happy together. But you spoke of another person, and I must ask you not to think badly of Bingley. He has done nothing wrong."

"I think he has listened too much to his sisters and his friend."

"But would they really try to stop him from marrying me if they knew he loved me? I do not want to think that they have behaved badly. I am not ashamed of being wrong about him, so let us see this in the best light."



Elizabeth could not argue with this, and from this time they hardly talked about Bingley.

Wickham often visited the Bennets and he was open and friendly with them. He told his story about Darcy to everybody, and everybody was happy to think that they had always disliked Darcy. Only Jane thought there might be a reason why Darcy had behaved as he did.

After a week, Mr. Collins went back to Hunsford. He hoped that when he returned to Longbourn he and Charlotte would get married.

Two days later, Mrs. Bennet's brother and his wife came to spend Christmas at Longbourn as usual. Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner were intelligent, pleasant people, and Mrs. Gardiner was a great favorite with her nieces. She was very close to Jane and Elizabeth and they had often stayed with her in London. Mrs. Bennet told her about Mr. Bingley and Mr. Collins, and when she was alone with Elizabeth, Mrs. Gardiner said, "I'm sorry for Jane. Do you think she would come back to London with us? A different place might make her happier." Elizabeth thought this was an excellent idea.

The Gardiners stayed a week, and every day Mrs. Bennet invited some of the officers to dinner. Mrs. Gardiner met Wickham and spoke to him about Derbyshire, because before she got married she had lived there. She had seen Pemberley and had heard about old Mr. Darcy. When she heard how young Mr. Darcy had behaved towards Wickham she tried to remember something about him when he was a boy. At last she was sure she remembered that people spoke of him as a proud child.

After Christmas, Jane returned to London with the Gardiners and Mr. Collins came back to Hertfordshire to marry Charlotte. The day before the wedding, Charlotte came to say goodbye.

"Will you visit me in Hunsford, Elizabeth?" asked Charlotte.

"I will," agreed Elizabeth, although she did not think she would enjoy it.

"My father and Maria are coming in March," added Charlotte, "and I hope you will come with them."

After the wedding, Mr. Collins and Charlotte went to Hunsford and Charlotte soon wrote to Elizabeth. She praised her new house, the furniture, and the neighborhood, and said that Lady Catherine was very friendly. Elizabeth realized she would only see how things really were when she visited.

After Jane had been in London for about a week, she wrote to Elizabeth about a visit she had made to Bingley's sisters: Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst. She wrote:

I asked about their brother, and Miss Bingley said he was well, but that they hardly ever saw him because he spent so much time with Mr. Darcy. I found that Miss Darcy was expected to dinner. I wish I could see her. I expect I shall see them here soon.

Elizabeth shook her head. She was sure Miss Bingley would not tell her brother that Jane was in London.

Two weeks later, Miss Bingley visited Jane. Jane wrote to Elizabeth:

I realize that Miss Bingley does not wish to be a friend to me and I do not understand why she wished us to be friends earlier. She visited me yesterday and she was quite cold and unfriendly and said nothing about wanting to see me again. I think she is scared that I will marry her brother, but he has not come to see me, so I think that he does not care about me.

Elizabeth realized that Bingley did not love Jane now, and she hoped he would marry Miss Darcy. Wickham had said she was very proud, and Bingley would be unhappy.

Elizabeth did not see Wickham much now because he had become interested in somebody else. This was Miss King, a young lady who had ten thousand pounds. Elizabeth did not feel hurt. She believed that he needed to marry somebody with money. Although Elizabeth had not liked Charlotte marrying for money, she did not feel that Wickham had behaved badly. It was natural for him to need money, and she wished him happiness.

Chapter

6

Elizabeth Visits Hunsford

January and February went by, and nothing happened in the Bennet family. In March, Elizabeth left Longbourn with Sir William Lucas and his daughter Maria to go to Hunsford to visit Charlotte. On the way, they visited the Gardiners in London. Jane looked well, but Mrs. Gardiner told Elizabeth that she was often unhappy.

Mrs. Gardiner invited Elizabeth to join her and Mr. Gardiner in a tour of the Lakes in the summer. Elizabeth accepted the invitation very happily. "My dear aunt!" she said. "How lovely! What a wonderful time we will have!"

The next day Elizabeth, Sir William, and Maria went to Hunsford. They were warmly welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Collins. They were shown the sitting-room and the garden, and admired everything. Mr. Collins then took Sir William for a walk, and the ladies returned to the house. Charlotte showed them around. It was a small but comfortable house, and, when Mr. Collins was forgotten, it was a pleasant place. Because Charlotte was happy, Elizabeth supposed that he was often forgotten. The evening was spent talking about Hertfordshire news. When Elizabeth went to bed she thought that Charlotte had made a success of her new life.

At about twelve the next day, Elizabeth was in her room when Maria called to her to come quickly to the dining-room,

which was at the front of the house. Elizabeth ran down and saw that a carriage had stopped at the gate. The lady in it was talking to Charlotte and Mr. Collins.

"Who is that?" asked Elizabeth.

"It is Lady Catherine's daughter, Miss de Bourgh," replied Maria. "Look at her! She is so thin and small!"

Elizabeth had a pleasant idea. "She will make Darcy a very good wife," she thought.

Miss de Bourgh drove away and Mr. Collins and Charlotte came in. Charlotte told them that they had all been asked to dinner at Rosings the next day. Mr. Collins was very happy, and he could hardly talk about anything else for the rest of the afternoon.

The next day they walked across the park to Rosings and the servants took them to the room where Lady Catherine and her daughter were sitting. Charlotte introduced them all and they sat down. Lady Catherine was a tall, large woman, who felt she was very important. Her daughter said very little. They sat down to dinner, which was very good. Mr. Collins praised every dish and Sir William repeated everything he said. Lady Catherine smiled at them both.

When the ladies went to the drawing-room, Lady Catherine gave Charlotte a lot of advice about her house and animals and asked Maria and Elizabeth a lot of questions. She asked Elizabeth how many sisters she had, if they were older or younger, and if any of them were married.

"Do any of your younger sisters go to balls, Miss Bennet?" she asked.

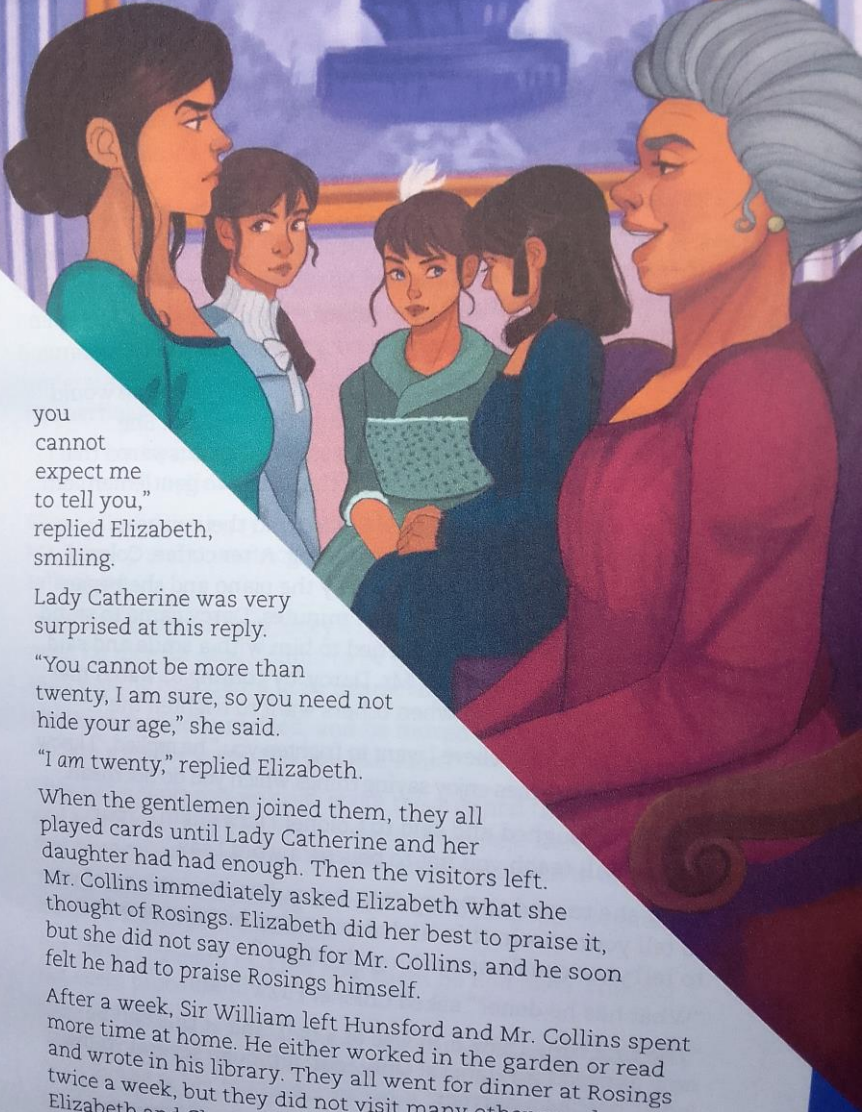
"They all go," answered Elizabeth.

"All of them! And the older girls are not married yet! Very strange! Are your younger sisters very young?"

"The youngest is fifteen. Perhaps *she* is too young, but it would be very hard for younger sisters if they could not go to balls because their older sisters were not married."

"You have strong ideas for so young a person! What is your age?"

"With three younger sisters who are already going to balls,



you
cannot
expect me
to tell you,"
replied Elizabeth,
smiling.

Lady Catherine was very
surprised at this reply.

"You cannot be more than
twenty, I am sure, so you need not
hide your age," she said.

"I am twenty," replied Elizabeth.

When the gentlemen joined them, they all
played cards until Lady Catherine and her
daughter had had enough. Then the visitors left.
Mr. Collins immediately asked Elizabeth what she
thought of Rosings. Elizabeth did her best to praise it,
but she did not say enough for Mr. Collins, and he soon
felt he had to praise Rosings himself.

After a week, Sir William left Hunsford and Mr. Collins spent
more time at home. He either worked in the garden or read
and wrote in his library. They all went for dinner at Rosings
twice a week, but they did not visit many other people.
Elizabeth and Charlotte had many pleasant conversations,
and Elizabeth often went for walks in the park.

Elizabeth had heard that Darcy was expected at Rosings, and two weeks after her arrival at Hunsford, he came. Mr. Collins hurried to Rosings to visit him, and to everybody's great surprise, when he returned, Darcy and another young gentleman were with him. This was his cousin, Colonel Fitzwilliam. He was about thirty, not handsome, but very pleasant. He began talking immediately, but Darcy sat silently for some time. At last he asked Elizabeth about her family. She said they were well and then added, "My oldest sister has been in London for three months. Have you seen her there?"

She knew that he had not, but she wished to see if he would say that he knew that Jane had seen the Bingleys. She thought he looked a little embarrassed as he answered that he had not seen Jane. Soon after this, the two gentlemen left.

A few days later, Mr. and Mrs. Collins and their visitors were invited to Rosings in the evening. After coffee, Colonel Fitzwilliam asked Elizabeth to play the piano and she began playing some songs. After a few minutes, Darcy came to stand near the piano. Elizabeth turned to him with a smile and said, "You want to frighten me, Mr. Darcy, by coming to watch me! But I am never scared when others want to frighten me."

"You do not really believe I want to frighten you," he replied. "I know that you sometimes enjoy saying things which you do not mean."

Elizabeth laughed and said to Colonel Fitzwilliam, "Your cousin will teach you not to believe a word I say."

Then she turned to Darcy. "Mr. Darcy, it is very unkind of you to tell your cousin this, and also unwise, because now I want to tell your cousin something about you."

"What has he done?" asked Colonel Fitzwilliam.

"The first time I saw him was at a ball, and at this ball he only danced four dances! Only four, although several young ladies needed a partner."

"I did not know any ladies at the ball except those in my own group," explained Darcy. "And I cannot talk easily to strangers."

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"And I cannot play the piano well because I do not practice enough. But that is my own fault," said Elizabeth.

Darcy smiled and said, "You are right."

The next morning, Elizabeth was alone in the house when there was a ring at the door. Then the door to the drawing-room opened and Darcy came in.

He was very surprised that she was alone and told her he had thought that all the ladies were at home. They sat down and were silent for a time. Then Elizabeth asked: "I understand that Mr. Bingley is not thinking of returning to Netherfield again?"

"I have not heard him say so, but he may not spend much time there," replied Darcy.

Elizabeth did not reply. She did not want to talk more about Mr. Bingley and it was now Darcy's turn to find something to talk about.

"Mr. Collins seems very lucky in his choice of wife. And it must be nice for Mrs. Collins to be close to her family," he said, pulling his chair a little nearer to her.

Elizabeth looked surprised, and he moved back again and said, in a colder voice, "Do you like Kent?"

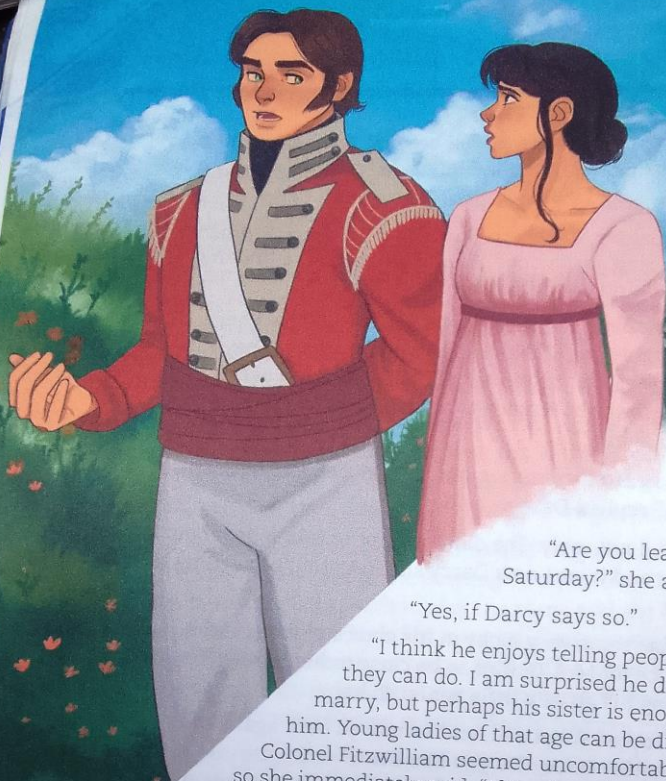
They had a short conversation about the area and then Charlotte and Maria returned from their walk to the village. Darcy stayed a few more minutes and then left without saying much to anybody.

"What can be the meaning of this!" said Charlotte. "He must be in love with you, Elizabeth."

But when Elizabeth told her how silent he had been, this did not seem probable.

Colonel Fitzwilliam and Mr. Darcy visited the ladies almost every day. Charlotte did not think Darcy was in love with Elizabeth. He often looked at her, but he did not seem to admire her.

One day while Elizabeth was walking in the park, she met Colonel Fitzwilliam and he walked home with her.



"Are you leaving on Saturday?" she asked.

"Yes, if Darcy says so."

"I think he enjoys telling people what they can do. I am surprised he does not marry, but perhaps his sister is enough for him. Young ladies of that age can be difficult." Colonel Fitzwilliam seemed uncomfortable, and so she immediately said, "I have heard nothing bad about her. She is a great favorite with Mrs. Hurst and Miss Bingley. I think you know them."

"Yes, a little. I think Darcy has just helped their brother. He told me that he had saved a friend from a very unwise marriage, and I think he meant Mr. Bingley."

Elizabeth did not answer.

When she got back to the house, Elizabeth went to her room and thought about what Colonel Fitzwilliam had said. Darcy, not Miss Bingley, was the reason for Jane's unhappiness. She felt so angry that she cried and got a headache. In the evening she decided not to go to Rosings. She did not want to see Darcy.

Chapter

7

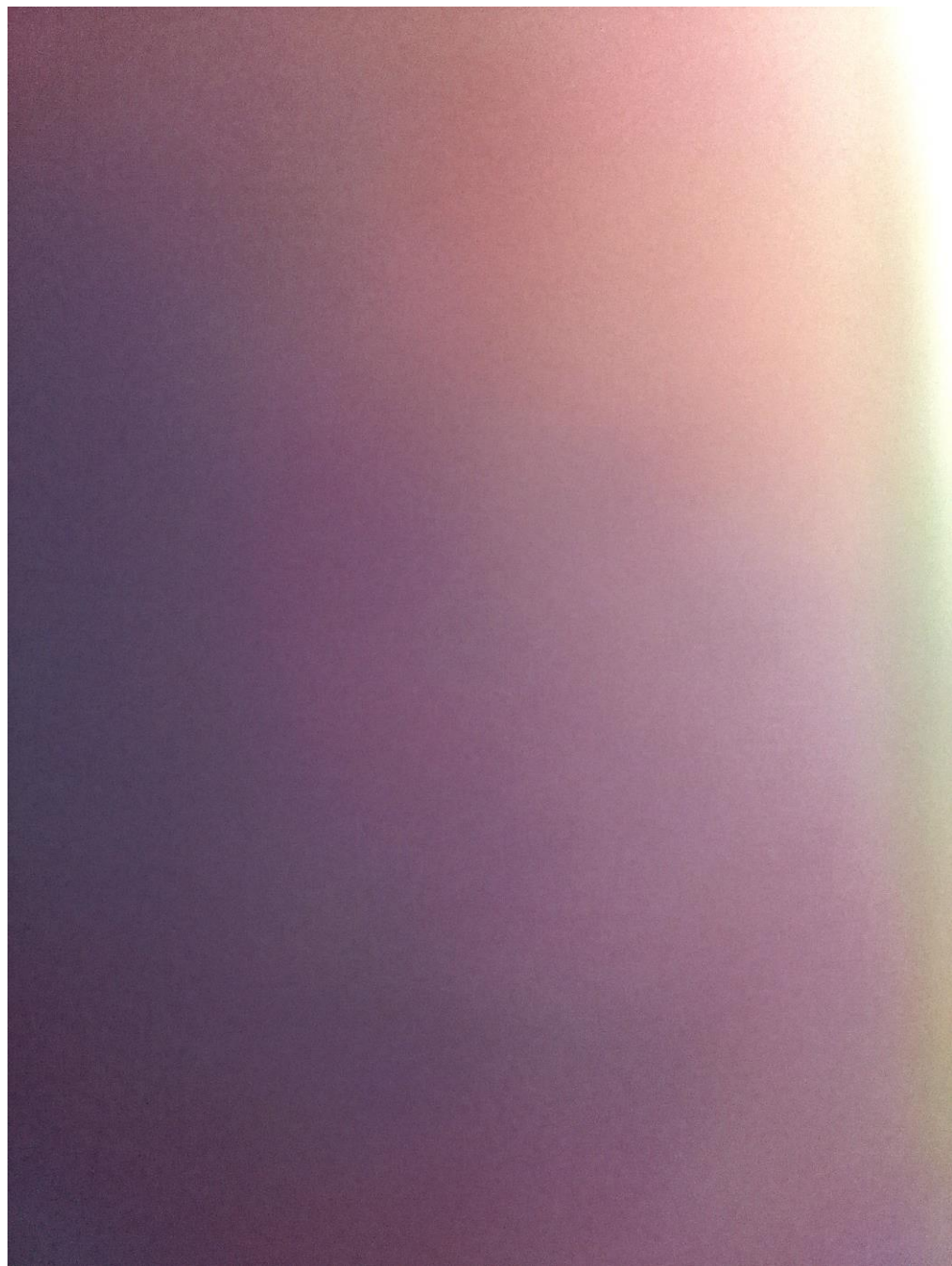
A Letter

When everybody had gone to Rosings, Elizabeth began reading the letters Jane had sent to her in Hunsford. While she was reading, the doorbell rang, and a minute later Darcy walked into the room. Elizabeth was very surprised. He asked about her health and she answered with cold politeness. He sat down for a few moments and then got up and walked around the room. After several minutes he said, "I have fought against my feelings for a long time, but now I must tell you how much I admire and love you."

Elizabeth was so surprised she could not speak. He told her all that he felt and had felt for her. He spoke well, but he did not speak only of love. He told her that the lower rank of her family had been a great difficulty for him. Then he asked her to marry him.

The color came into her face as she said, "It is usual for a lady to thank a gentleman when he offers her his hand, but I cannot thank you. I have never wanted you to think well of me, and you have tried very hard not to. I am sorry to give you pain and I hope it will not continue for long."

Darcy was so angry his face turned white. He fought to stay calm, and then said, "And this is all the reply which I may expect! Why, with so little politeness, have you refused me?"





"Why did you tell me that my low rank was a difficulty for you?" she replied. "This was a reason for my impoliteness, if I was impolite. But I have other reasons. Do you think I would accept the man who stopped his friend from marrying my sister?"

Darcy did not look at all sorry. "I am happy that I stopped him," he said.

Elizabeth continued: "And long before this, Mr. Wickham told me that you refused to give him the vicar's job that was his."

"So this," said Darcy, "is what you think of me! My faults are clearly great. But perhaps they seem greater to you because you did not like my honesty about your rank."

"You are wrong, Mr. Darcy," replied Elizabeth. "That only meant that I did not have to refuse you politely because you had not spoken like a gentleman. You could not offer me your hand in any way that would make me accept it. I feel that you are the last man in the world that I could marry."



"You have said enough, Miss Bennet. I perfectly understand your feelings and am ashamed of what mine have been. Forgive me for taking up your time, and accept my best wishes for your health and happiness," he replied, and quickly left the room and then the house.

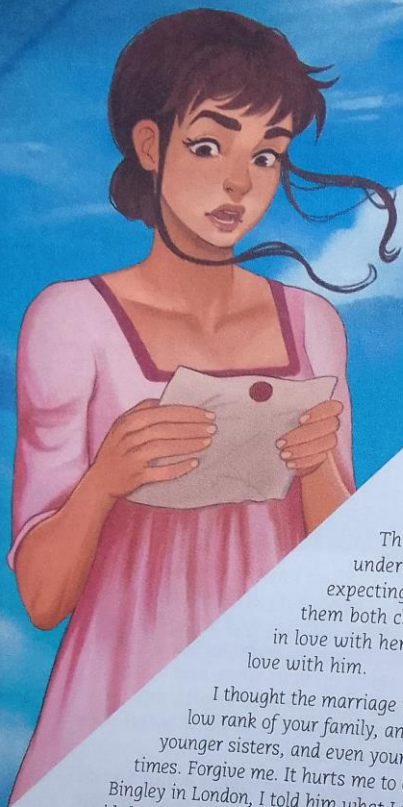
Elizabeth sat down weakly and cried for half an hour.

Every time she thought of what had happened, she felt more surprised. Darcy had been in love with her for months! She continued to think of their conversation until it was time to go to bed.

After breakfast the next morning, she went for a walk. At one of the gates to the park she saw Darcy coming towards her.

He gave her a letter and said, "I wanted to give you this. Will you read it, please?" Then he left her. Elizabeth opened the letter, which he had written that morning. She read:

Do not worry that I will repeat here the feelings that I described last night. Those must be forgotten quickly by both of us. I am writing to explain my actions to your sister and Mr. Wickham.



At Netherfield I saw that Bingley preferred your sister to any other young woman, but I did not think his feelings for her were strong. Then at the ball at Netherfield I understood that many people were expecting him to marry her. I watched them both closely and I saw that he was in love with her, but she did not seem to be in love with him.

I thought the marriage unwise also because of the low rank of your family, and because your mother, your younger sisters, and even your father all behaved badly at times. Forgive me. It hurts me to offend you. When I joined Bingley in London, I told him what I thought. He believed me when I said that I thought your sister did not love him.

There is only one thing that I am ashamed of, and that is that I did not tell him that your sister was in London. I knew from Miss Bingley that she was, but I did not tell him. He still does not know. I am sorry for hurting your sister's feelings, but I did not mean to.

And now Mr. Wickham. He is the son of a very good man who worked for my father. My father died about five years ago, and in his will he asked me to give Mr. Wickham a job as a vicar when it was possible, and also one thousand pounds. Mr. Wickham's own father died soon after this and Mr. Wickham wrote to me to say that he had decided not to become a vicar. He asked if I would give him some money instead of the job. I agreed and gave him three thousand pounds. For about three

years I heard little of him, but then he wrote to me and told me that he had no money and wanted to become a vicar, if I gave him a job in a local church. I refused, and he did not write to me again.

I must now tell you something very painful. My sister, who is ten years younger than I, left school last year and went to live in London with a lady called Mrs. Younge. This lady took her to Ramsgate last summer, and told Mr. Wickham that they were going there.

He visited my sister and soon she thought that she was in love with him. She agreed to run away with him and get married. However, I joined them a day or two before they planned to leave, and she told me about their plan. I wrote to Mr. Wickham, who left immediately. I am sure he wanted to have my sister's money and to hurt me.

This is what really happened. Colonel Fitzwilliam will tell you that it is true.

Darcy

When Elizabeth began reading this letter she did not want to believe anything in it, but then she began to think that what Darcy said about Wickham might be true. Wickham had said he would never speak against Darcy, but he had done so, when Darcy had left Netherfield. And he became interested in Miss King only when he discovered that she had money.

She felt very ashamed of herself. "How badly I have acted!" she thought. "My prejudices have made me think well of one and badly of the other. I liked one because he was pleasant to me, and I disliked the other because he offended me."

She read the letter again. She had to agree that Jane did not show her feelings and that her family had behaved badly at the ball. After walking for two hours, she returned home. She was told that Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam had called to say goodbye. The next morning, they left Rosings.

Over the next week, Elizabeth read Darcy's letter many times and she had many different feelings about it. She respected his character, although she was not sorry she had refused him. She was ashamed of herself and her family, and unhappy that Wickham was not the man she had thought he was.

Chapter 8

The Regiment Leaves Meryton

On the day of Elizabeth's departure, she and Mr. Collins met for breakfast a few minutes before the others appeared. Elizabeth thanked him for her visit and said she had had a most enjoyable six weeks.

Mr. Collins replied, "I am happy to hear that. You may carry a very good report of us back to Hertfordshire. And, my dear cousin, I wish you as much happiness in marriage as I have. My dear Charlotte and I are so similar that I think we were designed for each other."

Elizabeth replied with sincerity that she believed he was very happy. She felt sorry for Charlotte, but Charlotte did not seem unhappy.

After breakfast the carriage arrived, and Elizabeth and Maria left. "So many things have happened!" said Maria. "We have had dinner nine times at Rosings and drunk tea there twice! How much I shall have to tell!"

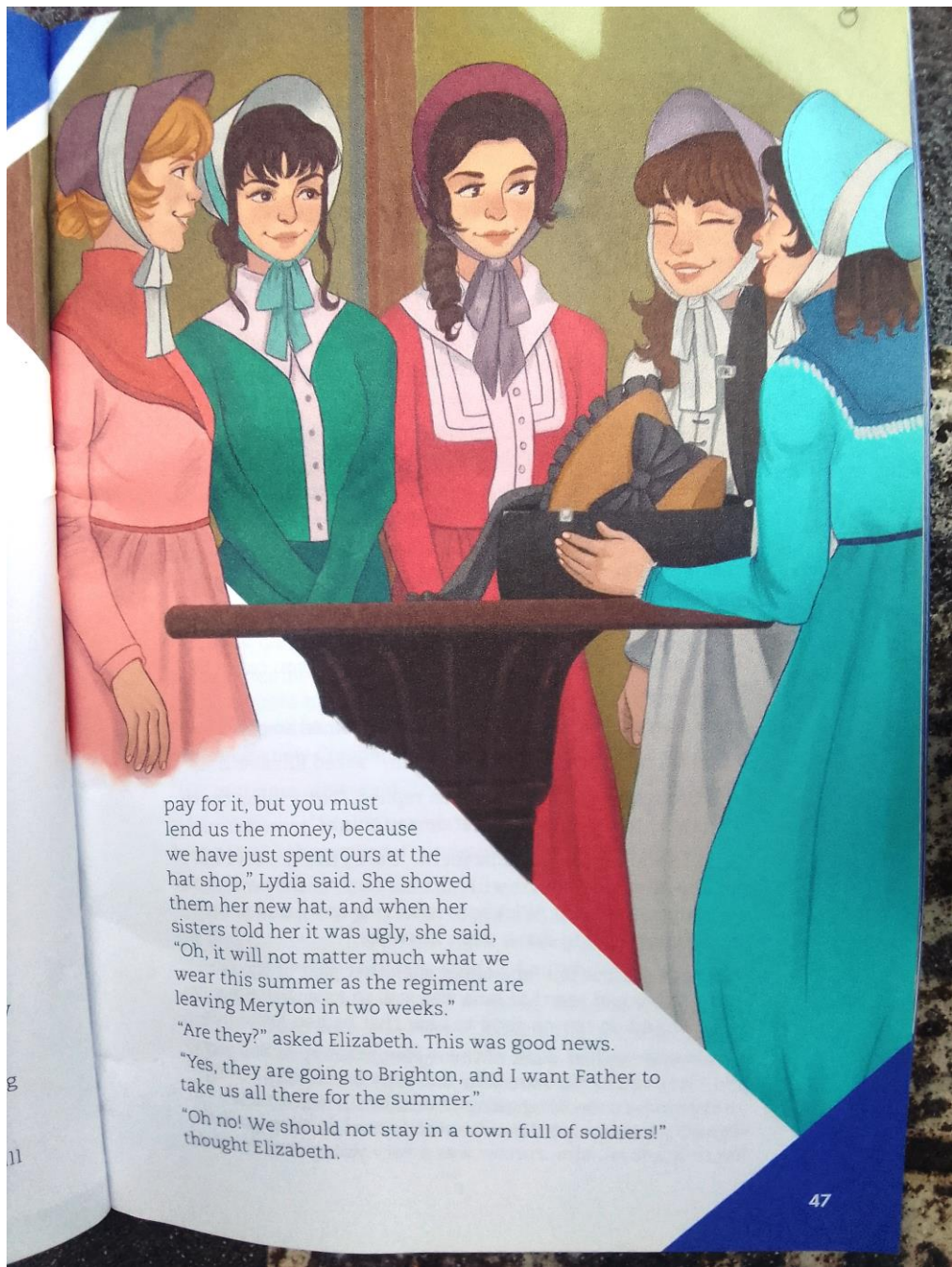
Elizabeth privately added, "And how much I shall have to hide!"

After about four hours, they reached the Gardiners' house. They stayed there for a few days and then Jane, Elizabeth, and Maria went back to Hertfordshire. They met Kitty and Lydia at a hotel in a town near Longbourn. Here Mr. Bennet's carriage was going to meet them.

After welcoming them, Kitty and Lydia showed them a table with a lot of cold meat on it. "Is this not a nice surprise? We will



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pay for it, but you must lend us the money, because we have just spent ours at the hat shop," Lydia said. She showed them her new hat, and when her sisters told her it was ugly, she said, "Oh, it will not matter much what we wear this summer as the regiment are leaving Meryton in two weeks."

"Are they?" asked Elizabeth. This was good news.

"Yes, they are going to Brighton, and I want Father to take us all there for the summer."

"Oh no! We should not stay in a town full of soldiers!" thought Elizabeth.

As they sat down at the table, Lydia said, "Dear Wickham is not going to marry Mary King because she has gone to live in Liverpool. He is safe."

As soon as they had eaten, and the older girls had paid, the carriage was ordered, and they left.

Their welcome at home was very warm. Mrs. Bennet was very happy to see Jane, and several times Mr. Bennet said to Elizabeth, "I am happy you are back, Lizzy."

The next morning, Elizabeth told Jane what had happened at Hunsford between Darcy and herself. At first Jane was very surprised, and then she felt sorry for Darcy. "He was wrong to be so sure of you," she said, "but he must be very unhappy now."

"He has other feelings. They will probably soon drive away his feelings for me," replied Elizabeth.

She told Jane about his letter and what he had said about Wickham. Jane could not believe that one person could be so bad.

"Poor Darcy!" she said. "And Wickham seemed so good!"

"Should I tell other people about him?" asked Elizabeth.

Jane thought for a little and then replied, "No, I think there is no need to tell others. What do you think?"

"That I should not," said Elizabeth. "Darcy has not told me I can say anything, and it will hurt his sister if the part about her becomes known. Wickham is leaving soon, and people here do not need to know what he is like."

Elizabeth did not tell Jane about the other part of Darcy's letter. She could see that Jane was still in love with Bingley, and it would do her no good to hear that he had loved her.

It was now the last week of the regiment's stay in Meryton, and Kitty and Lydia were very unhappy. But Lydia's unhappiness soon disappeared because the wife of the regiment's colonel, Colonel Forster, invited Lydia to go with her to Brighton. Mrs. Forster was a very young woman, who

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loved having fun. She and Lydia had become close friends in the last two months.

Elizabeth went secretly to her father and asked him not to let Lydia go. She told him how badly Lydia behaved and how she might behave worse in Brighton. Her father listened and then said, "Lydia will never be happy until she has done something silly in front of others, and if she is in Brighton, we will not know about it."

"If she continues to go after officers, and Kitty follows her, our good name will disappear," said Elizabeth.

Mr. Bennet saw how serious she was and replied, "Do not worry, my love. Colonel Forster is a good man and he will keep her out of real trouble. Lydia has no money, so the officers will be more interested in other women."

Elizabeth still felt that Lydia should not go.

On the day before the regiment left Meryton, Wickham came for dinner at Longbourn with some other officers. Elizabeth told him that she had spent some of her time at Hunsford with Colonel Fitzwilliam and Mr. Darcy, and asked him if he knew Colonel Fitzwilliam. He replied that he did.

"His manners are very different from his cousin's," he said.

"Very different, but I like Mr. Darcy more now that I know him better," she replied. "I understand him more now."

Wickham looked uncomfortable, but then said, "I am happy that Mr. Darcy is wise to pretend to do what is right. He probably does this on his visits to Rosings because he wishes very much to marry Miss de Bourgh."

Elizabeth smiled but she said nothing. She and Wickham did not talk to each other again during the evening. They said goodbye politely, and possibly both wished never to meet again. Lydia also left Longbourn at the end of the evening, because she was going to Brighton the next morning. Mrs. Bennet told her many times to enjoy herself as much as possible.

A Summer Tour

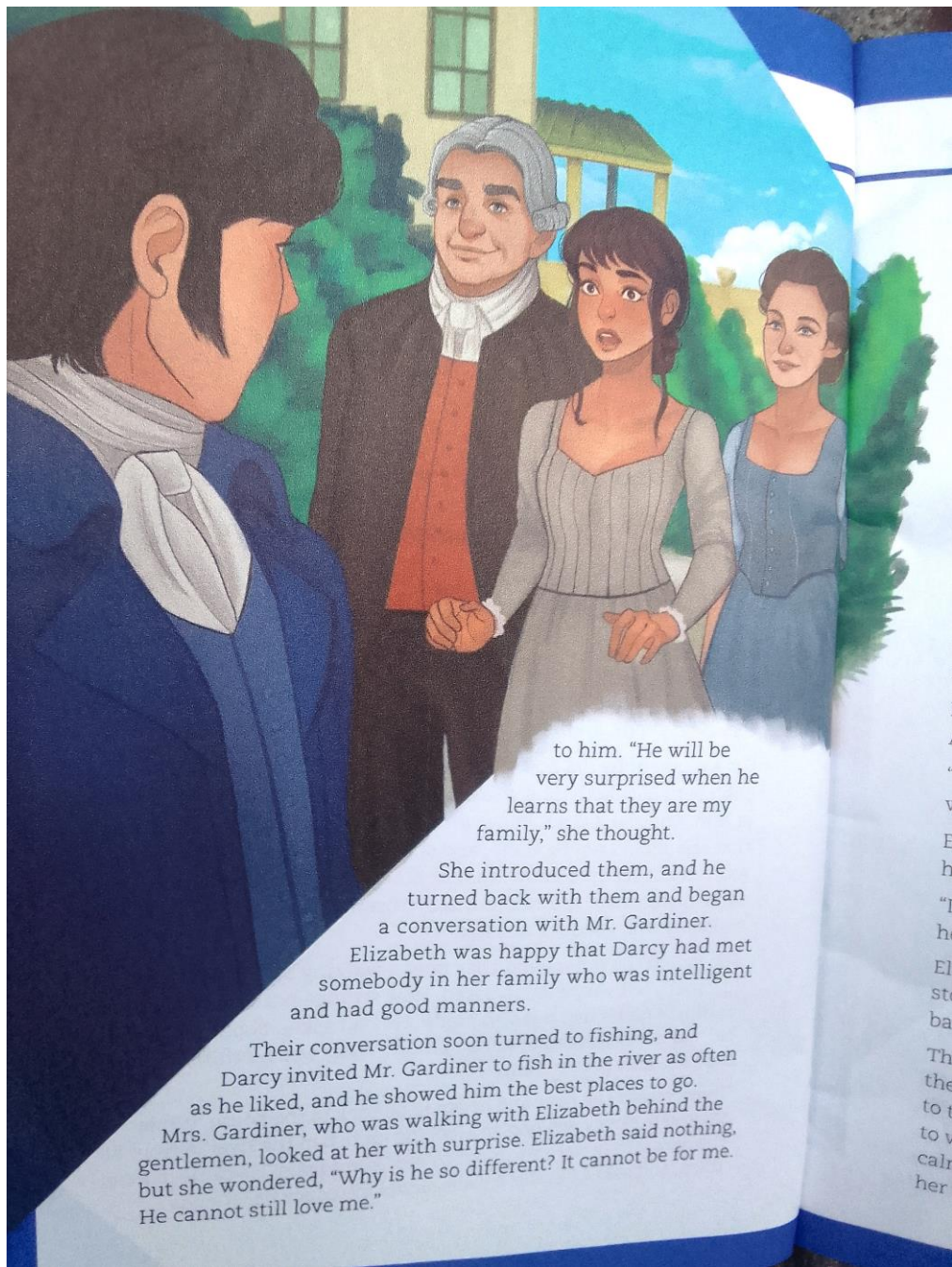
Chapter 9

Lydia wrote to her mother, but her letters were very short. She described places she had been to or things she had seen in the shops. Her letters to Kitty were a little longer, but Kitty did not read them out.

Two weeks before the date for Elizabeth's tour of the Lakes, a letter arrived from Mrs. Gardiner. She said that they now had to leave two weeks later than planned, and could only be away for a month. They could not go so far as the Lakes and now planned to go to Derbyshire. Elizabeth was sad, but the four weeks passed, and the Gardiners arrived. Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner and Elizabeth left for their tour, and the Gardiners' children stayed at Longbourn.

The Gardiners and Elizabeth visited the most interesting places in Derbyshire, and then went to the little town of Lambton, where Mrs. Gardiner lived when she was a girl. She told Elizabeth that they were near Pemberley and asked if she would like to visit it. Elizabeth did not want to go, but that evening she asked a servant at the hotel if the Darcy family were at Pemberley. The servant said that they were not, so the next morning she agreed to the visit.

They drove out in the carriage and entered the park around Pemberley. From the top of a small hill they could see the house. It was a large, beautiful, stone building. They drove down to it and were shown into the hall. The housekeeper




to him. "He will be very surprised when he learns that they are my family," she thought.

She introduced them, and he turned back with them and began a conversation with Mr. Gardiner.

Elizabeth was happy that Darcy had met somebody in her family who was intelligent and had good manners.

Their conversation soon turned to fishing, and Darcy invited Mr. Gardiner to fish in the river as often as he liked, and he showed him the best places to go. Mrs. Gardiner, who was walking with Elizabeth behind the gentlemen, looked at her with surprise. Elizabeth said nothing, but she wondered, "Why is he so different? It cannot be for me. He cannot still love me."



After some time, Mrs. Gardiner grew tired and asked to walk with her husband so that she could hold onto his arm. Darcy took her place next to Elizabeth and they walked on together. Elizabeth told Darcy that his housekeeper had said that he would not arrive until the next day. He explained that he had come early to do some business. "The others will join me tomorrow," he said. "Mr. Bingley and his sisters are coming – and my own sister. May I introduce her to you while you are in Lambton?"

Elizabeth was very surprised and happy to know that he did not think very badly of her because she had refused him. They reached the house before Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner and while they waited for them, they were silent and uncomfortable. Then Elizabeth remembered she had been traveling, so they talked about Derbyshire until Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner arrived. Darcy invited them into the house for some food and drink, but they refused and they all politely said goodbye to each other.

In the carriage, Mr. Gardiner said, "He is very polite and kind. And there was no need to be. He hardly knows Elizabeth."

"He is not as handsome as Wickham, Lizzy," said her aunt, "but why did you say he was unpleasant?"

Elizabeth explained that he had never been so pleasant as he had this morning.

"It is hard to believe that he was so unkind to Wickham," said her aunt.

Elizabeth told her that in Kent she had learned that Wickham's story was not completely true, and that Mr. Darcy was not as bad, or Wickham as good, as they had believed.

The next morning Elizabeth heard the sound of a carriage outside the hotel. She saw that Darcy and a young lady were in it. She ran to tell her uncle and aunt that Darcy and his sister were coming to visit them. She walked up and down the room trying to stay calm, but the looks of surprise from her uncle and aunt made her feel worse.

Miss Darcy and her brother entered the room and Darcy introduced his sister to them. Miss Darcy was very shy and said very little. After a few minutes Bingley arrived, and he asked after her family in his usual friendly way. He said to Elizabeth, "It is a very long time since I saw you. We have not met since November 26th, when we were all dancing together at Netherfield." Elizabeth was happy that he remembered the date; and that he did not seem to be in love with Miss Darcy.

Elizabeth saw that Darcy was talking very politely and kindly to her uncle and aunt. These were people that a few months ago had been too low in rank for him to talk to. She had never seen him so friendly and open with anybody, not even his friends.

When the visitors got up to leave, Darcy asked his sister to join him in inviting Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner and Miss Bennet to dinner at Pemberley. Miss Darcy shyly obeyed, and the Gardiners agreed to visit the day after next.

The Gardiners saw that they needed to think well of Darcy because he was clearly very much in love with their niece. They found from their Lambton friends that people said he was proud, but generous to the poor.

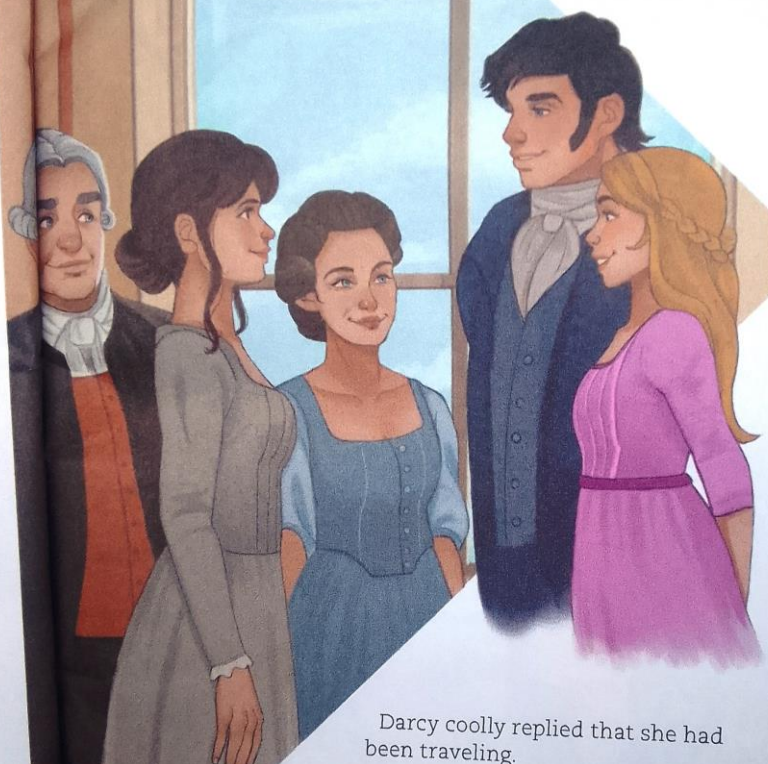
That night Elizabeth lay awake for two hours trying to decide what she felt for Darcy. She did not hate him. She respected him, and she felt grateful to him for forgiving her for everything she had said at Hunsford.

The next morning, Mrs. Gardiner and Elizabeth went to visit Miss Darcy at Pemberley. They were shown into a large room where Miss Darcy, Mrs. Hurst, and Miss Bingley were sitting. Miss Bingley and her sister, Mrs. Hurst, clearly did not want to see Elizabeth and said very little. Then Darcy came in and Elizabeth tried to stay calm while everybody watched them. She saw that he wanted her and his sister to get to know each other, so she talked to Miss Darcy as often as she could. Miss Bingley noticed this and felt angry.

When Elizabeth and Mrs. Gardiner had left, Miss Bingley said, "How bad Elizabeth Bennet looks! She is so brown!"



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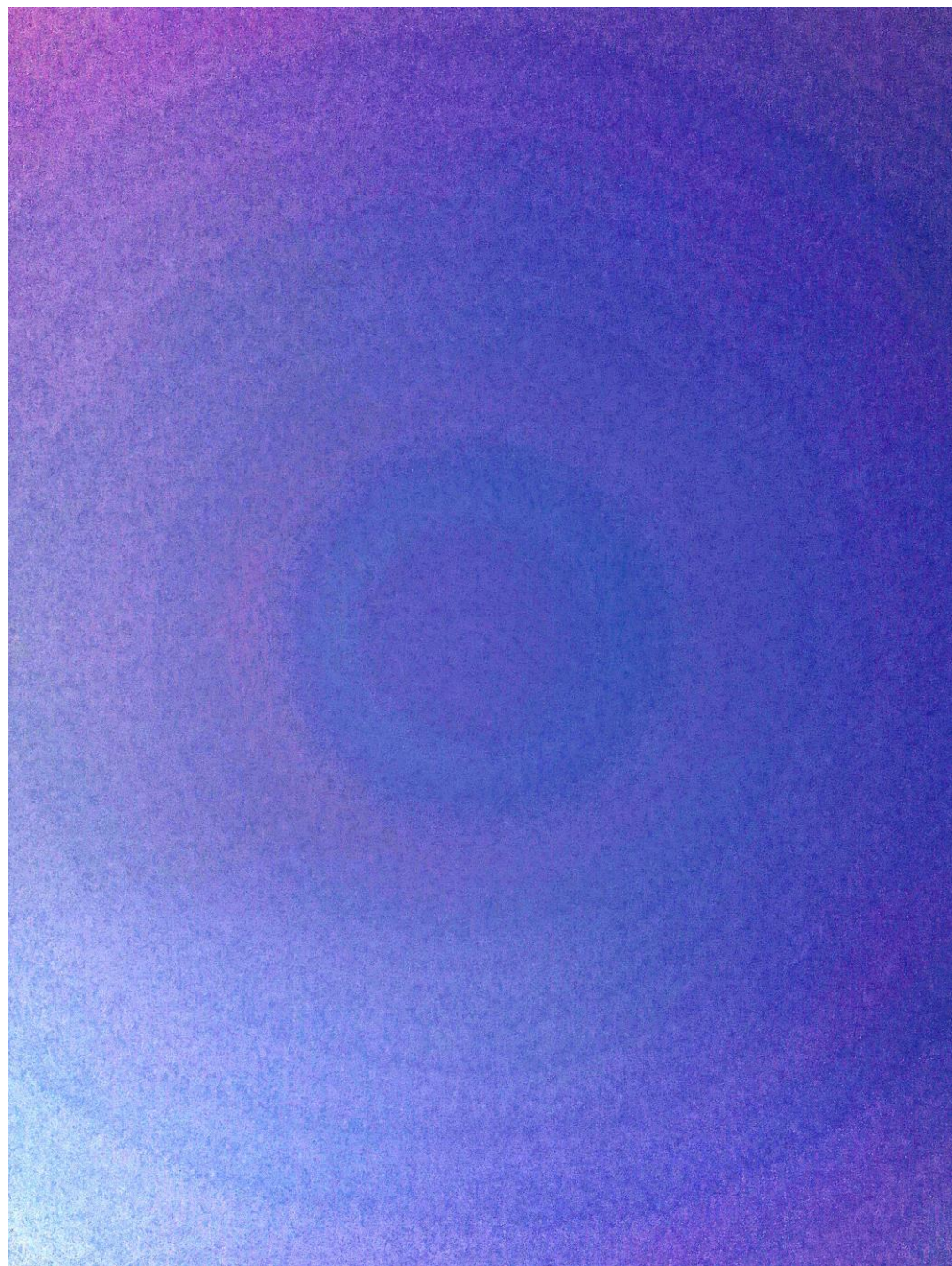
Darcy coolly replied that she had been traveling.

"I have never thought she was beautiful," Miss Bingley continued, "but I believe you thought her quite pretty, Mr. Darcy."

"Yes," he replied, "but that was when I first knew her. But for many months now I have thought her to be one of the loveliest women I know."

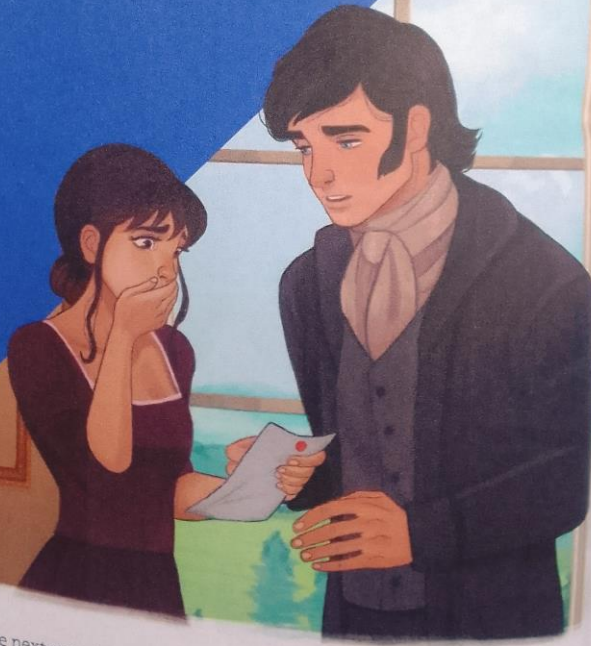
He then went away, and Miss Bingley felt angrier.

On the drive home, Mrs. Gardiner and Elizabeth talked about everything that had happened, except what had interested them both. They talked about his sister, his friends, his house, but not him.



Chapter 10

A Sudden Departure



The next morning, Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner went for a walk and left Elizabeth to read two letters she had received from Jane. One had arrived late because it had been sent to the wrong place. She read this one first. It had been written five days earlier. In the first part, Jane described some little parties, but then she wrote:

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"My father has gone to London and Jane has written to ask for my uncle's help. But how will they find her? And how will they make Wickham marry her?"

Darcy walked up and down the room, looking serious. Elizabeth realized that he could not marry her now because her family's good name had gone for ever. And at that moment she also realized that she could love him.

He said kindly, "I wish that I could say something that would make you feel better. We will not see you at Pemberley today, I think."

"Oh, yes, please apologize for us to Miss Darcy. Say that business calls us home."

He promised to do so, and hoped that things would end well. With a serious look, he went away.

When her uncle and aunt came back, Elizabeth read them the letters. Mr. Gardiner immediately promised to help. Elizabeth explained that she had told Mr. Darcy they could not come to Pemberley. An hour later they were in the carriage.

As they drove away, Mr. Gardiner said, "Would Wickham act in this way to a girl who has a family? Would he not think that her family would come for her?"

"But Lydia has no brothers," said Elizabeth, "and Father never notices what is going on. And I know what Wickham really is. Jane and I know that he has behaved very badly."

"Does Lydia know that?" asked Mrs. Gardiner.

"No!" said Elizabeth. "I only learned the truth about him when I was in Kent. When I came home I told Jane, and we decided not to tell the others because the regiment was leaving. And when it was decided that Lydia should go to Brighton, I never thought of telling her."

They reached Longbourn at dinner-time the next day. There was no news of Lydia, and they all went upstairs to see Mrs. Bennet in her bedroom. Mr. Gardiner promised her that he would help Mr. Bennet.

"And when you find them, make them marry," said Mrs. Bennet.

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"And tell Lydia she will have as much money for wedding clothes as she likes when they marry."

In the afternoon, Elizabeth had some time alone with Jane.

"Until Colonel Forster came, everybody thought that they were going to get married, I suppose," Elizabeth said.

"Yes, we did," said Jane.

"And what is Father going to do in London?" asked Elizabeth.

"He plans to find the carriage they took from Brighton and to discover where they went," answered Jane.

The next morning Mr. Gardiner went to London, and two days later, his wife received a letter from him. He had found Mr. Bennet and had taken him back home with him. He had also written to Colonel Forster to ask if anybody in the regiment knew where Wickham might go.

At Longbourn everybody waited for a letter from Mr. Gardiner, but first there was one from Mr. Collins. He wrote:

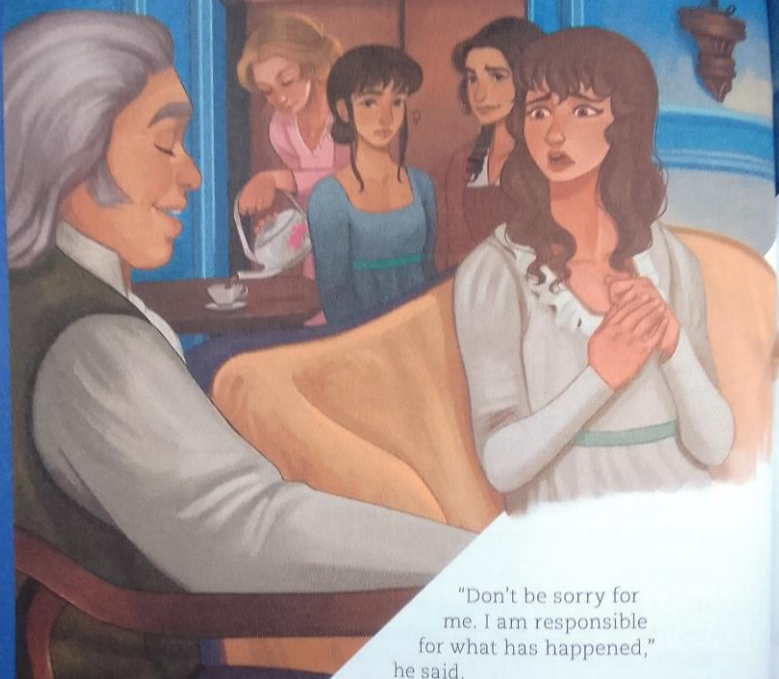
My dear sir,

Mrs. Collins and I are truly sorry for you. The death of your daughter would be less painful than this terrible event. Lady Catherine and her daughter are very sorry for you, too, because now nobody will wish to marry your other daughters.

Let me advise you, my dear sir, to throw this child out of your family for ever.

Mr. Gardiner wrote again when he had heard from Colonel Forster. Wickham had not had any close friends in the regiment, and because he had left large debts behind in Brighton, he would probably not tell anybody in the regiment where he was.

The next day, Mr. Bennet returned to Longbourn, and Mrs. Gardiner and the children went back to London. Mr. Bennet seemed as calm as usual. In the afternoon, when he had tea with Elizabeth, Mary, and Kitty, Elizabeth said she was sorry for him.



"Don't be sorry for me. I am responsible for what has happened," he said.

Jane came in to get her mother's tea and take it to her bedroom.

"One day I will sit in my library in my night clothes and give as much trouble as I can!" Mr. Bennet said. "Or perhaps I will wait until Kitty runs away."

"I am not going to run away," said Kitty. "If I go to Brighton, I will behave better than Lydia."

"You are never going to Brighton!" he replied. "I have learned to be careful, Kitty. No officer will enter my house again, and you will not go to any more balls."

Kitty began to cry.

"Well, well," he said. "Do not be unhappy. If you are a good girl for ten years, I will take you to London for a few days."



Two days later, while Jane and Elizabeth were walking in the garden, their housekeeper told them that Mr. Bennet had received a letter from Mr. Gardiner. They found their father in another part of the garden and he gave them the letter. They read:

My dear brother,

I have seen them both. Wickham will marry Lydia if you agree that she will have a thousand pounds when you die, and if you pay her, during your life, one hundred pounds a year. You will see from this that Wickham has some money, and his debts will be paid. If you agree, write back immediately. You do not need to come to London again; I will do everything. Lydia comes to us today and will be married from this house.

Mr. Bennet walked back with Jane and Elizabeth to the house.

"I want to know how much money your uncle has paid him," he said, "and how I am going to pay him back."

"Money? My uncle? What do you mean?" asked Jane.

"I mean that Wickham would not marry Lydia for less than ten thousand pounds," said her father.

"Ten thousand pounds! How will we repay any of that?" asked Elizabeth.

Her father did not answer. When they reached the house, he went to the library and the girls went to the breakfast-room.

"I cannot believe that our uncle has paid him ten thousand pounds," said Jane.

"One day we may learn what he has paid," said Elizabeth. "He has been very generous, because Wickham has no money."

The girls took their uncle's letter from their father and read it to their mother.

"My dear, dear Lydia!" Mrs. Bennet said, happily. "She will be married at sixteen! Mrs. Wickham! How good it sounds! I will get dressed and visit my sister and Lady Lucas."

Mr. Bennet soon replied to Mr. Gardiner. He agreed to everything and asked to know more about what Mr. Gardiner had done to help him. He was too angry to send a message to Lydia. Elizabeth was now very sorry that she had told Darcy about Lydia because she did not want people to know about Wickham and Lydia living together. Of course, Darcy would not marry her now. He would not want to join a family that Wickham was in. At the same time, she began to understand that he was the man who would best suit her.

Mr. Gardiner soon wrote again to Mr. Bennet. He told him that Wickham had decided to join another regiment, which was in the north.

It is good that his new regiment is so far away. I have asked Colonel Forster to pay his debts in Brighton and have promised to pay him back. We will also pay all his debts in Meryton. All this should be completed in a week. Then he and Lydia will go north. Lydia very much wishes to visit you at Longbourn.

Mr. Bennet at first refused to let Lydia visit Longbourn, but Jane and Elizabeth talked to him and after some time he agreed to let her. When he wrote again to Mr. Gardiner, he said that she and her new husband could visit after the wedding.

When Lydia and Wickham arrived at Longbourn, Mrs. Bennet welcomed them both very warmly. Mr. Bennet's welcome was not so warm. Lydia and Wickham were the same as they had always been: Lydia was noisy and wild, Wickham smiled and was pleasant.

Lydia said, "Do people here know I am married? I thought they might not, so while we were in the carriage I took off my glove and put my hand by the window so that people could see my ring."

Elizabeth could not listen to this, and she ran out of the room. She



joined them again when she heard them going into the dining-room. She saw Lydia walk up to her mother and heard her say to Jane, "Ah! Jane, I must take your place now because I am a married woman."

After dinner, she went to show her ring to the housekeeper.



When she came back, Mrs. Bennet said, "My dear, must you go so far away?"

"Oh! Yes, we must," replied Lydia. "You must all come and see us in Newcastle this winter, and when you leave, one or two of my sisters may stay with me, and I shall get husbands for them."

"Thank you," said Elizabeth, "but I do not like your way of getting husbands."

One morning, while Lydia was sitting with Jane and Elizabeth, she said, "Lizzy, I have not told you about my wedding. In the morning, my aunt talked to me all the time, but I only heard about one word in ten because I was wondering if Wickham would wear his blue coat. After breakfast, the carriage arrived to take us to the church, but my uncle was called away on business. Luckily, he came back ten minutes later and we all went to the church. We got there in time and Wickham and Mr. Darcy were waiting for us."

"Mr. Darcy!" repeated Elizabeth.

"Yes, he was there with Wickham. Oh – I forgot! It is a secret! I must not tell you about it!"

Elizabeth wrote to her aunt and asked her to explain why Darcy had been at the wedding. She soon received a letter from her, which she took into the garden to read.

My dear niece,

Before I came home from Longbourn, Mr. Darcy visited your uncle to tell him that he had talked to your sister and Wickham. He had come to London to find them because he felt it was his fault that everybody thought Wickham was a good man. His pride had stopped him from telling people what had happened between him and Wickham.

He remembered that Wickham knew a lady called Mrs. Younge and he went to her for information. Mrs. Younge gave him Wickham and Lydia's address and he found them. Wickham told him that he had never planned to marry Lydia and had left Brighton because he had a lot of debts.

He did not know what he would do next, but he still hoped to marry somebody rich. Mr. Darcy offered him money to marry Lydia and he

agreed. Mr. Darcy is going to pay his debts, which will cost him thousands of pounds. He has given him another thousand pounds and has paid for his job in the new regiment. Your uncle wanted to give Wickham some money, but Mr. Darcy refused to let him. Lizzy, you must not tell anybody except Jane about this.

Mr. Darcy came to the wedding and had dinner with us the next day. I like him very much. He was very careful – he hardly talked about you at all. Forgive me if I have said too much, and do not keep me out of Pemberley. I would like to ride around the park in a little carriage.

Yours,

M. Gardiner

While Elizabeth was thinking about this letter, Wickham appeared.

"You are walking alone, dear sister," he said.

"I am. Are the others coming out?"

"I do not know. Mrs. Bennet and Lydia are going to Meryton. And so, dear sister, I hear from your uncle and aunt that you have seen Pemberley."

"I have," Elizabeth replied.

"And did you go to the village of Kympton?" asked Wickham.

"No, I don't think so."

"The vicar's job that I was promised was in Kympton. It is a lovely place."

"I have heard that there was a time when you did not want to be a vicar and that you accepted some money instead of the job at Kympton," said Elizabeth.

"There is some truth in that," he said.

They were now almost at the door to the house. Elizabeth said, with a smile, "Mr. Wickham, we are brother and sister now. Do not let us argue."

She held out her hand and he kissed it, though he hardly knew where to look, and they entered the house.

Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy Return

The day of Wickham and Lydia's departure soon came.

"Write to me very often, my dear," Mrs. Bennet said to Lydia.

"I will write as often as I can, but married women do not have much time for writing. My sisters may write to me. They will have nothing else to do."

Wickham smiled and said many pretty things, and the pair left Longbourn.

Mrs. Bennet was unhappy for a time, but then she heard from Mrs. Philips that Bingley was coming back to Netherfield that week and was going to stay for several weeks.

Bingley arrived and three days later Mrs. Bennet saw him riding towards Longbourn. She called all the girls to come and look. Jane did not go, but Elizabeth went, and saw that Darcy was with him. She said nothing and sat down again.

"There is a gentleman with him," said Kitty. "It's that tall, proud man who was with him before."

"It is Mr. Darcy!" said Mrs. Bennet. "Well, all Mr. Bingley's friends are welcome, but I must say I dislike Mr. Darcy."

Jane looked at Elizabeth. She did not know much about their meeting in Derbyshire and she thought that her sister must feel uncomfortable. Mrs. Bennet received Bingley very warmly, but she was cold to Darcy. Elizabeth, who knew what he had done for Lydia, felt very ashamed.



Darcy hardly said anything to Elizabeth or anybody. Elizabeth was angry with herself for wanting more from him.

"Since you left Netherfield, Mr. Bingley," said Mrs. Bennet, "many changes have happened in the neighborhood. Miss Charlotte Lucas is married, and one of my own daughters, too. Have you heard?"

Bingley replied that he had and congratulated her.



"They have gone to Newcastle," continued Mrs. Bennet. "His new regiment is there. He has *some* friends who have helped him, although others have not."

Elizabeth, who knew her mother was talking about Darcy, was so embarrassed that she could hardly stay in her seat. Bingley looked at Jane very often and clearly found her as beautiful as he had before.

When the gentlemen had gone, Elizabeth went for a walk. She was puzzled by Darcy. "Why did he come if he did not want to talk?" she thought.

Jane joined her and said, "I will not be embarrassed the next time I see Mr. Bingley. Everybody will see that we are just friends."

"Yes," said Elizabeth, laughing. "Oh, Jane, take care."

"You cannot think I am in danger now, Lizzy!"

"I think you are in very great danger of making him fall in love with you again!" Elizabeth said.

The next Tuesday the Bennets gave a dinner for a large group of friends. Bingley and Darcy came, and during the dinner it was clear that Bingley still admired Jane.

Elizabeth could not speak to Darcy at dinner because he was not sitting near her, and after dinner the ladies all stood around the coffee table and the gentlemen could not come near. Darcy walked to another part of the room and Elizabeth followed him with her eyes. When the card tables were put out, her mother asked Darcy to sit at her table, and that was the end of Elizabeth's hopes for the evening.

When the guests had gone, and they were alone, Jane said to Elizabeth, "It was a very enjoyable evening. Everybody was very pleasant."

Elizabeth smiled.

"Lizzy, you must not smile! I can enjoy talking to him without wanting more from him, and I think he never planned to make me love him. He is just very friendly and open."

A few days later, Bingley visited again. He was alone because Darcy had gone to London for ten days. He came to dinner the next day and the day after that.

In the evening after this second dinner, Elizabeth found him and Jane alone in the drawing-room. They were standing near the fireplace and were talking seriously. When they saw her, Bingley said something quietly to Jane and ran out of the room.

Jane immediately told Elizabeth that she was the happiest person in the world. Elizabeth congratulated her warmly and Jane then hurried upstairs to tell her mother the news. Bingley had gone to ask Mr. Bennet if he could marry Jane.

It was a very happy evening for all the Bennets, and when Bingley had left, Mr. Bennet said to Jane, "I am sure you will be very happy. You are both so kind that every servant will steal from you and you are both so generous that you will spend more than you have."

"Spend more than they have!" said Mrs. Bennet. "My dear Mr. Bennet, what are you talking about? He makes four or five thousand a year!" Turning to Jane, she continued, "My dear Jane, I am so happy! He is the most handsome young man I have ever seen!"

From that time, Bingley visited Longbourn every day.

One evening Jane told Elizabeth, "I am so happy because he has told me that he did not know that I was in London last spring. And he did not return to Netherfield because he thought I did not love him."

"He made that mistake because he does not think highly of himself," replied Elizabeth.

"I want you to be as happy as I am!" said Jane. "I want to find another man like him for you!"

"If you gave me forty men like him, I would not be as happy as you because I am not as good as you. No, no, let me find a man for myself. If I am very lucky, I may meet another Mr. Collins!"

One morning, about a week after Jane's engagement to Bingley, Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth, and Kitty were sitting together in the dining-room, when they heard a carriage outside the front door. Soon their visitor entered the dining-room. It was Lady Catherine de Bourgh. All the Bennets were very surprised, Elizabeth most of all.

"Good morning, Lady Catherine," said Elizabeth. Lady Catherine did not reply and sat down. After a moment she said, "I hope you are well, Miss Bennet. This lady I suppose is your mother."

"Yes, Lady Catherine," replied Elizabeth.

After a short silence, Lady Catherine said, "You have a very small park."

"I am sure it is much smaller than the park at Rosings," said Mrs. Bennet. "May I ask if Mr. and Mrs. Collins are well?"

"Yes, very well," replied Lady Catherine.

She got up and said, "Miss Bennet, would you walk in the park with me?"

Elizabeth and Lady Catherine left the house and walked in silence towards a small wood. When they reached it, Lady Catherine said, "You must know why I have come, Miss Bennet."

"I do not know at all," said Elizabeth in surprise.

"Miss Bennet," replied Lady Catherine angrily, "do not pretend with me. I will be completely honest. Two days ago, I heard a report that your sister was engaged, and that you would soon be engaged to Mr. Darcy. Although I know this must be a lie, I decided to visit you immediately."

"If you believed it was not true," said Elizabeth, "I am surprised you decided to visit. What did you want to say to me?"

"I want you to tell me that it is not true. Can you tell me that?"

"You may be completely honest with me, but I may choose not to answer your questions."

"Miss Bennet! You must answer me. Has my nephew made you an offer of marriage?"

"You have told me that that is impossible."

"Miss Bennet, I am one of his family and I must know his plans."

"But you do not need to know *mine*."

"This marriage can never happen. The engagement between Mr. Darcy and my daughter was planned by his mother and me because they belong to the same great family," replied Lady Catherine. "Have you not heard me say so?"

"Yes, but Mr. Darcy may make his own choice," said Elizabeth.

"Tell me clearly, Miss Bennet: are you engaged to him?"

Elizabeth did not want to answer, but after a moment she said, "I am not."

"And will you promise me never to become engaged to him?"

"I will not."

"Miss Bennet, I will not go away until you promise."

"I will never promise. I must return to the house now."



As they walked back, Lady Catherine told Elizabeth that a marriage to her nephew would bring him and his family down in the world.

"I am very angry with you, Miss Bennet," she said, and got into the carriage.

The next morning, her father asked her to come into the library. He said, "I have just received a very surprising letter from Mr. Collins about you."

"About me! What does he say?" Elizabeth asked.

"The Lucases have told him about Jane's engagement and that you are going to marry a rich gentleman. Then he says: *But we believe that his aunt, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, does not like the idea of the marriage.* So, Mr. Darcy is the man! A man who has probably never looked at you in his life! It is so funny!"

"Yes, it is very amusing!" said Elizabeth.

"He says: *Lady Catherine told me that she would never agree to the marriage.* Then he adds: *I was surprised to hear that you had received Lydia and her husband into your house. You should forgive them as Christians, of course, but you should never see them.* That is his idea of Christian forgiveness! Lizzy! You look unhappy!"

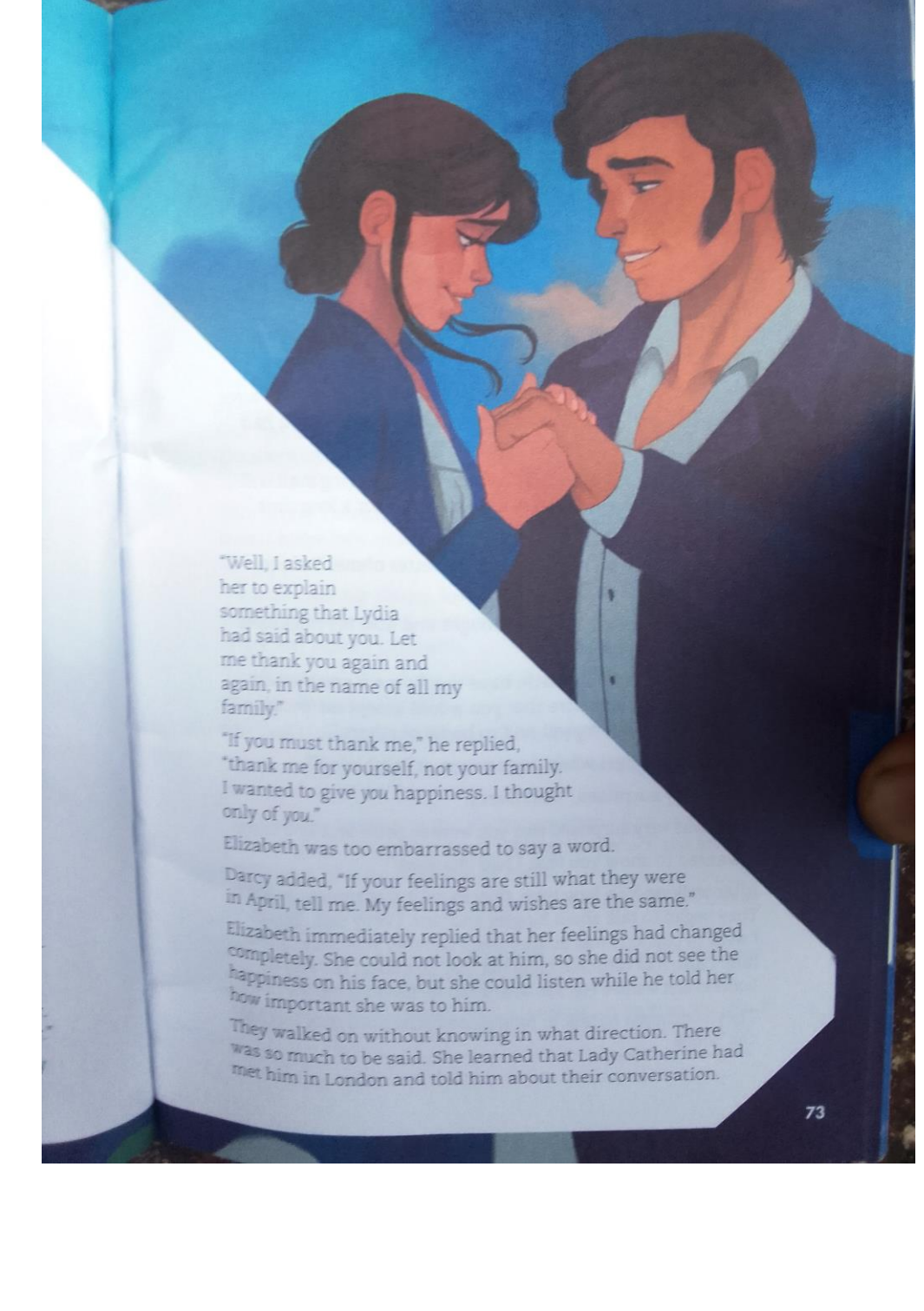
"No, no," said Elizabeth. "It is just very strange!"

"Yes, that is why it is so amusing. You do not like Mr. Darcy, and he has never noticed you."

Elizabeth laughed, but she wanted to cry. Perhaps her father was right.

A few days after Lady Catherine's visit, Darcy came to Longbourn with Bingley. Bingley suggested going for a walk, and so Jane, Elizabeth, and Kitty left with the two gentlemen. At the Lucases, Kitty left them to visit Maria. Bingley and Jane were walking together, so Elizabeth was alone with Darcy. She decided she must say something, so she said, "Mr. Darcy, I must thank you for your great kindness to my sister."

"I am very sorry that you have heard about it," replied Darcy in surprise. "I did not think Mrs. Gardiner would tell you."

An illustration of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy from Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice. Elizabeth is on the left, looking down at their clasped hands. Mr. Darcy is on the right, looking at her with a slight smile. They are standing outdoors under a blue sky with soft clouds. Elizabeth is wearing a dark blue coat over a light blue dress. Mr. Darcy is wearing a dark blue coat over a light blue shirt and a dark cravat.

"Well, I asked her to explain something that Lydia had said about you. Let me thank you again and again, in the name of all my family."

"If you must thank me," he replied, "thank me for yourself, not your family. I wanted to give you happiness. I thought only of you."

Elizabeth was too embarrassed to say a word.

Darcy added, "If your feelings are still what they were in April, tell me. My feelings and wishes are the same."

Elizabeth immediately replied that her feelings had changed completely. She could not look at him, so she did not see the happiness on his face, but she could listen while he told her how important she was to him.

They walked on without knowing in what direction. There was so much to be said. She learned that Lady Catherine had met him in London and told him about their conversation.

"When I heard you had refused to promise not to accept me, I began to hope," he said. "I knew that you were open about your feelings."

Elizabeth went red and laughed as she replied, "Yes, I was very open about them that evening in Hunsford."

"I feel very ashamed of how I behaved to you then."

"Neither of us behaved well then," said Elizabeth, "but we have behaved better since."

"I cannot forgive myself so easily," said Darcy. "I cannot forget what I said to you, and your words to me: 'because you had not spoken to me like a gentleman.'"

"Oh! Do not repeat what I said then. Remembering it all will do no good. I have been very ashamed of it for a long time," replied Elizabeth.

"Did my letter soon make you think better of me? Did you believe me?" asked Darcy.

She explained what she had thought and how her prejudices had slowly disappeared.

"And you, dearest Elizabeth, have taught me a great lesson. That evening, I was sure that you would accept me because I thought so well of myself and so badly of others."

"What did you feel when you saw me at Pemberley?"

"I was very surprised," said Darcy.

"And I was very surprised that you were so polite and kind to me."

"I wanted to show you that I had changed."

After walking for a long time, they found it was time to go home. They began to talk about Bingley and Jane. Darcy said, "Before I went to London I told Bingley that I believed your sister loved him. I also told him that I had not told him about her stay in London last winter. He was angry, but he has forgiven me now."

They continued to talk of Bingley and Jane until they reached the house.

In the evening, Darcy went to talk to Mr. Bennet in the library. When he came back, he smiled at Elizabeth. He came to the table where she was sitting and said to her quietly, "Your father wants to see you in the library."

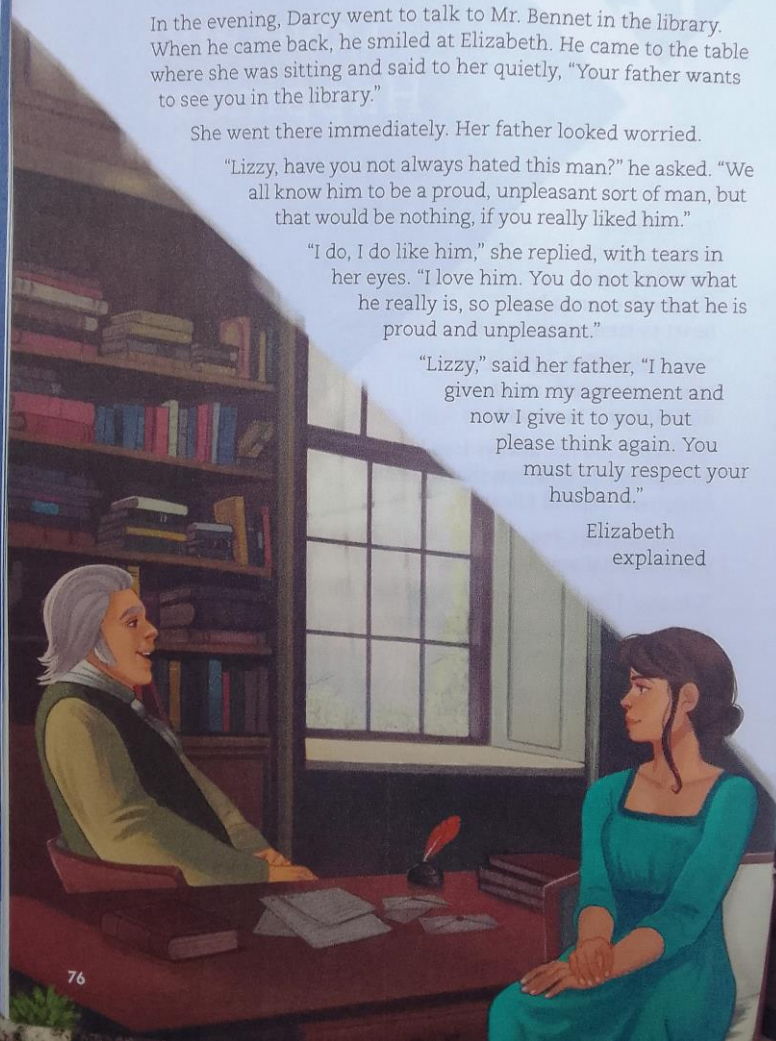
She went there immediately. Her father looked worried.

"Lizzy, have you not always hated this man?" he asked. "We all know him to be a proud, unpleasant sort of man, but that would be nothing, if you really liked him."

"I do, I do like him," she replied, with tears in her eyes. "I love him. You do not know what he really is, so please do not say that he is proud and unpleasant."

"Lizzy," said her father, "I have given him my agreement and now I give it to you, but please think again. You must truly respect your husband."

Elizabeth explained



2. At the ball, how does Darcy show that he likes Elizabeth?

3. Why does Sir William Lucas say, "There will soon be many congratulations!"?

4. Which people in her family does Elizabeth feel ashamed of at the ball? _____
5. Who is unhappy with Elizabeth's answer to Mr. Collins's offer of marriage? _____
6. What does Miss Bingley want her brother to do?

7. Why does Charlotte Lucas agree to marry Mr. Collins?

8. Why does Wickham become interested in Miss King?

4 Who says these sentences?

1. "What do you think of books?" _____ **Darcy** _____
2. "Let me advise you not to believe everything he says."

3. "I do not care that you have very little money."

4. "From this day, you must be a stranger to one of your parents."

5. "You know that I would accept him." _____
6. "I hope you can understand what I have done."

7. "It is very hard to think of Charlotte Lucas here."

8. "Every day I see how stupid people can be."

Read pages 35 to 49.

5 Check the correct answers.

1. At Elizabeth's first dinner at Rosings, she...
 - a. tells Lady Catherine how good the food is. ☐
 - b. feels quite frightened of Lady Catherine. ☐
 - c. answers Lady Catherine's questions. ☒
 - d. asks Lady Catherine about Darcy. ☐
2. Colonel Fitzwilliam tells Elizabeth that he thinks Darcy...
 - a. often tells his sister what to do. ☐
 - b. has stopped Bingley from marrying somebody. ☐
 - c. does not want to leave Rosings. ☐
 - d. admires her very much. ☐
3. Darcy tells Elizabeth that he loves her...
 - a. because she is so playful. ☐
 - b. but he cannot ask her to marry him. ☐
 - c. and asks if she loves him. ☐
 - d. but that her rank has been a problem for him. ☐
4. In his letter, Darcy tells Elizabeth that Wickham...
 - a. had planned to run away with Miss Darcy. ☐
 - b. had stolen money from him. ☐
 - c. had been a vicar for a short time. ☐
 - d. had had an argument with him in Ramsgate. ☐


6 Use these words to complete the sentences.

and because but


1. Mr. Collins visits Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam at Rosings and when he returns they come with him.
2. At Rosings, Elizabeth plays the piano for Colonel Fitzwilliam, _____ Darcy comes to stand near the piano.
3. Darcy is very angry when Elizabeth refuses him, _____ he stays calm.

4. Bingley did not visit Jane in London _____ Darcy did not tell him that she was there.
5. Darcy did not give Wickham a job as a vicar _____ earlier he had given him money instead of a job.
6. Elizabeth reads Darcy's letter _____ she starts to think differently about Wickham.
7. Kitty and Lydia are sad that the regiment is leaving Meryton, _____ Elizabeth is happy.
8. Elizabeth decides not to tell people about Wickham _____ Darcy has not told her that she can do so.

Read pages 50 to 65.

 Put the sentences in the correct order. Number them 1 through 8.

- a. Wickham and Lydia visit Longbourn. ☐
- b. Mr. Bennet returns from London. ☐
- c. Elizabeth learns that Darcy has given Wickham a lot of money. ☐
- d. Elizabeth and her aunt and uncle meet Darcy at Pemberley. ☒ 1
- e. Elizabeth and Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner return to Longbourn. ☐
- f. Lydia tells Elizabeth that Darcy was at her wedding. ☐
- g. Elizabeth tells Darcy that Lydia has run away with Wickham. ☐
- h. Mr. Gardiner writes to say that Wickham has agreed to marry Lydia. ☐

 Check the things that Darcy does.

1. He invites Mr. Gardiner to fish in the river at Pemberley. ☒
2. He brings Elizabeth some flowers when he visits her at Lambton. ☐
3. He promises Elizabeth to help her family. ☐
4. He writes to Mr. Bennet to tell him that he is going to find Lydia. ☐
5. He finds Lydia and Wickham in London. ☐
6. He has an argument with Wickham. ☐
7. He pays Wickham's debts. ☐
8. He asks Mr. Gardiner to give Wickham a thousand pounds. ☐

- 1 What do you know about Wickham, Lydia, and Lady Catherine? Choose words from the box for each person and write a description. Use other words, too.

aunt	daughter	son	dishonest	greedy	impolite
noisy	polite	poor	proud	rich	wild

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

- 2 Correct eight mistakes in this letter from Kitty Bennet to a friend.

lydia now lives in the ~~west~~^{north} of England with Wickham. He is a vicar. Jane has married Bingley, and Elizabeth has married Darcy. Darcy first asked Elizabeth to marry him while she was staying in London, but she refused him. They met again while she was visiting the lakes with my uncle and aunt. Father often visits Jane because he misses her. Bingley has three sisters, and Darcy has one, who is older than him. He is very rich. He makes twelve thousand a year!

3 Match the beginnings and endings of these sentences.

1. At the Meryton ball Darcy does not ask Elizabeth to dance because... ☐ f
2. At Netherfield Miss Bingley does not like Elizabeth because... ☐
3. Wickham tells Elizabeth that... ☐
4. Mr. Collins wants to marry one of the Miss Bennets because... ☐
5. After her visit to Hunsford, Elizabeth tells Wickham that... ☐
6. Darcy's housekeeper says that... ☐
7. Lydia does not tell anybody where... ☐
8. Elizabeth tells her aunt that... ☐

- a. he will get their house when their father dies.
- b. she is living with Wickham.
- c. she sees that Darcy likes her.
- d. he has known Darcy since he was a child.
- e. she is happier even than Jane.
- f. she is not pretty enough.
- g. he has never spoken angrily to her.
- h. she likes Darcy more.

4 Complete the summary of Elizabeth's visit to Hunsford. Use the words in the box. You do not need all of them. Use the correct form of the verbs.

admire	apologize	embarrassed	forgive	introduce
marriage	prejudices	pride	rank	respect

Elizabeth visits her friend Charlotte with Charlotte's father and sister. Mr. Collins introduces them to Lady Catherine de Bourgh and her daughter, who live at Rosings. Two weeks later, Darcy

housekeeper a woman who looks after a large house

introduce tell someone another person's name when they meet for the first time

manners usual ways of behavior

offend make someone unhappy or angry by something that you say

officer a person who gives orders in the army

pleasant attractive and friendly

praise say that someone or something is good

prejudice an unfair opinion about somebody

pride a feeling that you are important

rank someone's position in society

regiment a part of the army

respect think highly of someone

servant a person who works for someone

silly not sensible and not intelligent

tease say something to someone that will then make you laugh at them

vicar a man who works in a church

wedding the time when two people marry

will a legal paper that says what you want to do with your money after your death

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Elizabeth Bennet is young, smart, and amusing. She and her four sisters have learned that a woman has to find a rich man to be happy, but Elizabeth also wants to find someone she can love. Who will she find? There's Mr. Bingley, rich and charming; Mr. Wickham, an exciting and friendly soldier; Mr. Collins, a vicar with good prospects; and Mr. Darcy, enormously rich, but distant and proud. But will pride and prejudice separate Elizabeth from true love? Perhaps the greatest of Jane Austen's novels, it has been loved by millions of readers.



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